PAULINE BONAPARTE AND HER LOVERS

HECTOR FLEISCHMANN

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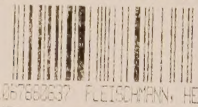
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PAULINE BONAPARTE AND HER LOVERS

PAULINE BONAPARTE
From an etching by Mme. Fournier

PAULINE BONAPARTE : AND HER LOVERS :

AS REVEALED BY CONTEMPORARY WITNESSES BY HER OWN LOVE-LETTERS AND BY THE ANTI-NAPOLEONIC PAMPHLETEERS

BY HECTOR FLEISCHMANN

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BOOK I

"LA DIVA PAOLINA"

PAULINE BONAPARTE : AND HER LOVERS :

CHAPTER I

HER EARLY LOVE-AFFAIRS

IT was one day in June, 1793, a sultry, sunny, radiant day, that Signora Letizia Bonaparte reached Marseilles, bringing along with her a shabby, cheerful troop of out-at-elbows boys and down-at-heels girls, and took up her abode on the fourth floor of a house in the Rue Pavillon. This is the first lodging they have had for a month which was not more or less of a makeshift. Ever since May 27, the day on which the anti-French Consulta, formed by Paoli in Corsica, decreed the banishment of the Bonapartes, the family has been wandering from thicket to thicket, through the bush of the table-land of the

island, sleeping on the undergrowth, with next to nothing to eat, living anyhow, an existence without a moment's peace, tracked and hunted day by day, far from their burned house and ravaged fields, pushing on towards the coast, towards Calvi, where Napoleon is waiting with the sailing-boat on which their chance of liberty depends. On June 11, without money or belongings, the family of fugitives embarked. Just the wind they wanted was blowing, and two days later[1] their boat reached Toulon.

Some means of living, some lodging, must be found, no matter where. To begin with, it is on the outskirts of La Valette, at the house of a woman named Cordeil, that they stay.[2]

After a few days the fugitives take to the road again, stopping a short time at Bandol. Marseilles is stopping-place number three. The town is given over to the Terror ; the tumbrils bearing the condemned to their death pass

[1] For the flight of the Bonapartes, cf. T. Nasica, *Mémoires sur l'enfance et la jeunesse de Napoleon jusqu'à l'âge de vingt-trois ans, précédés d'une notice historique sur son père ;* Paris, 1852 ; and the sources indicated by M. Frédéric Masson, *Napoleon dans sa jeunesse*, 1769–1793 ; Paris, 1908, p. 339.

[2] Baron Larrey, of the Institute of France, *Madame Mère* (*Napoleonis mater*), *essai historique* ; Paris, 1892, I. 213.

under their windows;[1] but that's nothing; Marseilles is a centre where some help can be had in these days of misery, and whence a look-out can be kept for the turning of the tide.

The older male members find their feet quickly enough. Joseph slips into the army administration, rises to the post of military superintendent of the first class, and gets entrusted with the supervision of the Marseilles hospitals. Lucien, after a spell of enforced idleness, makes up his mind to try his luck further afield. Accordingly we may find him in the Var, at Saint-Maximin, in charge of a warehouse, orator-in-chief at the Jacobin Club, and favoured suitor for the hand of the daughter of the inn-keeper with whom he lodges. Uncle Fesch, Signora Letizia's foster-brother, has also made his way. He is with the Alpine division of the army, looking after the stores. Louis has become a lieutenant in the 4th Regiment of Artillery. Jérôme will go to school as soon as he has got his first pair of breeches. Such is the introduction to French life of those who

[1] Prince Napoleon, *Napoléon et ses détracteurs*; Paris, 1887, p. 25.

one day will be high dignitaries of the Empire, and kings.

Then there are the girls.

The eldest is sixteen ; this is Elisa, who is going to be Princess of Lucca and Piombino, and Grand-duchess of Tuscany. At present she is looking after the poverty-stricken housekeeping, and the education of her youngest sister, little Caroline, nine years old and destined to wear the crown of Naples. Between No. 1 and No. 3 comes No. 2, Paulette, that is Pauline, making the most of a butterfly existence, with all the happy-go-lucky zest of thoughtless thirteen. Overshadowing all of them looms the Roman figure of their mother, overworn with cares, a prey to anxiety ; day by day and hour by hour on the defensive against the insidious assaults of want. And there, in the distance, hard by beleaguered Toulon, stands the figure of the second brother, Napoleon, beginning his career.

But the whole process is a painful one. What can Joseph do for the family ? A little assistance at odd intervals, and that with difficulty. Lucien, too ? To meet his bill at the inn he will find himself obliged to marry the daughter.

Fesch economizes, but that does not yield much! As for Louis, he cannot do much more than keep himself alive. So, too, with Napoleon, nothing happens, and Toulon not yet fallen. But something must be found to eat.

On July 11, 1793, Convention has decided to grant temporary assistance to the Corsicans who have been driven from their island as a result of loyalty to France; something to keep them from dying of hunger. The Bonaparte women-folk are entitled to this. Every month, then, as "needlewomen," they appear before the municipality to claim their dole.[1] So much for necessaries; but nothing beyond: no luxuries, no comforts for the mother, no pretty fripperies for the girls, not so much as a remnant of ribbon. So shabby are their dresses that they are ashamed to go out in daytime.[2] They can but economize and wait; perhaps one day . . .

Then, suddenly, comes the catastrophe. At Paris the Thermidor mob has just overthrown Robespierre. Immediately after, hands still

[1] Paul Gaffarel, *Les Bonaparte à Marseille* (1793–1797); Marseille, 1905, p. 42.

[2] Gustave Hue, *Un complot de police sous le Consulat, la conspiration de Cerrachi et Aréna (vendémiaire, an IX)*; Paris, 1909, p. 32.

stained with that noble blood are signing revocations, confiscations, arrests. Young Napoleon has been unfortunate enough to win the approval of the Incorruptible's brother; so we see him cashiered, arrested, and though released, sent nevertheless in disgrace to the Vendée army. Bearing the same name as he, the brothers bear similar burdens. Joseph flies to Genoa, and has to resort to pitiable makeshifts to keep body and soul together; Lucien is put under lock and key; Louis loses his rank and is sent to the school at Châlons. The discreet and crafty Fesch is the only one who, aided in his case by a non-committal name, escapes and continues to thrive, undetected, in various obscure corners.

But then comes the stroke of luck, as unexpectedly as the catastrophe had done. To checkmate the Vendémiaire royalist insurrection, Barras has need of a master of men, and, mindful of Toulon, has chosen Bonaparte for the police operations, which end in the "whiff of grapeshot" in the *parvis* St. Roch. Then the wheel of Fortune turns round again. Bundles of paper-money are sent off to Marseilles, Joseph will be appointed consul at Genoa, Lucien

military superintendent with the Germany Army, Louis a lieutenant. And the future is under consideration. Everything comes right in a minute. The sisters will have dresses, and feathers in their hats.

To emphasize the suddenness of this *volte-face*—and the need for it—a royalist pamphleteer, Peltier, a refugee in London, invents (during the Consulate) a letter by Pauline, dated from Marseilles at the end of September, 1795. It would be absurd to advance detailed proof of its apocryphal character, but, such as it is, it is curious, echoing as it does the wretchedness experienced by the family during this interval of gloom in the early days of the Napoleonidae.

"Alas" (writes Pauline in this note), "I should very much like to have a hat all to myself; Elisa and I have only one between us. It's true that to-day (which is my turn to wear it) I am making quite a different hat of it by replacing pink ribbon by white ribbon and trimming it with different flowers. But supposing any one happens to notice that when I am wearing it, my sister goes bareheaded, there are all my tricks discovered! Oh! how red I

should get! But patience! Napoleon writes that he has killed lots of Parisians and that he has been promised a fine post in payment for it. Then, I hope, I shall have a hat of my own."[1]

Barring the end, would not this note be worthy of Pauline and of what we know as regards her frivolity when appearance was concerned? But this much is nothing but good-natured jesting; Peltier has other accusations in his sack. It is to him that we owe the earliest tales of Pauline's earliest experiments in dissipation which were to lead up to that career of eroticism in which she was to excel.

According to Peltier, Pauline had her first lover at Marseilles in 1794, that is to say, when she was fourteen. He omits to inform us of his name, but makes up for that by telling us that she bathed stark naked in the harbour. The probability of this is obviously as clear as daylight. It appears that fervent royalists in London accepted them as gospel-truth. Furthermore, Peltier, covered with blushes, states that "widow Bonaparte," at Marseilles, did business

[1] Lefebvre Saint-Ogan, *L'Envers de l'Epopée; La Nouvelle Revue*, Feb. 15, 1910, p. 447.

PAULINE BONAPARTE

From a lithograph of the period of Louis-Philippe. Artist unknown

openly in the charms of her daughters.[1] Fourteen years of age! That is the year given by a Russian pamphlet of 1813, likewise, for the beginnings of Pauline's licentiousness. If we may believe this latter, Napoleon's sister began by leaving home to follow her lover, corporal Cervoni. The next year, i.e. 1796, she entered a house of ill-fame at Paris —another of these highly probable suggestions, inasmuch as we know that Pauline came to Paris for the first time towards the end of 1797, after her marriage with Leclerc. Corporal Cervoni, however, with whose name hers is coupled, is not mytholo-

[1] Lefebvre Saint-Ogan, *L'Envers de l'Epopée*, p. 439. These attacks irritated the First Consul considerably. "He was annoyed," says Bourrienne, "by the insults which came forth in plenty in English journals and pamphlets, especially the *Ambigu*, the work of one Peltier, who had been responsible for the *Actes des Apôtres* at Paris. The *Ambigu* was always full of exceedingly violent attacks on the First Consul and on the French nation, a very creditable thing, obviously, to its French author." (*Mémoires de M. de Bourrienne, ministre d'Etat, sur Napoléon, le Directoire, le Consulat, l'Empire, et la Restauration*; Brussels, 1829; IV. 244.) Bonaparte instituted proceedings, quite unofficially, against Peltier in London, and won the case, which gave the finishing touch to Peltier's defamatory fury.

[2] *Campagne de Napoléon en Russie et sa fuite, d'après les sources les plus véridiques*; Moscow, 1813. Voensky's *Rousskaïa Starina*, 1908, Vol. CXXXVI. p. 64. Frédéric Hausser, *Un pamphlet Russe sur Napoléon, Feuilles d'histoire du XVII^e au XX^e siècle*, Feb. 1, 1910, p. 145.

gical; this is Jean-Baptiste Cervoni, born 1768, "a man of merit, brave and honourable, albeit a Corsican," says Barras concerning him.[1] It was this same Cervoni who was the first to reconnoitre in Toulon, after its recapture, at the head of 200 men. He was killed on the

[1] Barras, moreover, speaking of Cervoni, recalls the following anecdote which undoubtedly shows him to have been far less intimate with the princess than is affirmed by the Russian pamphlet of 1813. "On her arrival at Aix the princess received the homage of all the old nobility—military and parliamentary. General Cervoni, a companion of her childhood, was received by her on the same cordial footing as of old, and maintained the same attitude himself so naïvely in fact, as one day to presume to sit down in a chair near her Imperial Highness while a numerous gathering of men and ladies remained standing. One of the princess's chamberlain's considered the general's behaviour so improper that he termed it impertinent and indecent. 'If the princess makes a sign to me,' said the chamberlain, 'I will put this free-and-easy general in his place, that is, out of the door.' When this remark reached Cervoni, which it did through one of his A.D.C.'s, it made him very angry. He is said to have marched up to the group of the princess's officials saying, 'Point out this wag to me so that I can give him a thorough good thrashing.' Cervoni added that the chamberlain took to his heels. Cervoni went back to the princess, who was the first to laugh at the snub to her obsequious chamberlain; and to show how entirely she was on the general's side asked him to arrange a reception and a ball for her at his country-house near Marseilles. Cervoni, when saying good-bye, added, 'I am going to get everything ready, but mind, no chamberlains.'" (*Mémoires de Barras, membre du Directoire*, edited with a general introduction, prefaces, and appendices by Georges Duruy; Paris, 1896, IV. 190 191.)

field of battle at Eckmühl. The list of Pauline's lovers is long enough for there to be no need to lengthen it by adding the name of Cervoni, who had less brilliant adventures in love-affairs and in barracks.

The royalist Peltier, then, is the inventor, or at any rate the earliest propagator, of the myth of Pauline the shameless. He repeated his charges often enough to render it an article of faith among his rivals. Like him, the English Jew, Lewis Goldsmith, gives the age of fourteen years as that of Pauline's introduction to the "honourable profession of courtezan."[1] Given this libellous statement, good Frenchmen of 1815 will have nothing more to do than to amplify in their outrageous pamphlets of the Hundred Days. For example, a personage in a peasant's dialogue holds forth thus with a comic earnestness :

"You will know that Pauline, Caroline,[2] and

[1] Lewis Goldsmith, notary, ex-interpreter at the Courts of Justice and the Council of the Prize Court at Paris, *Histoire secrète du cabinet de Napoléon Buonaparte et de la cour de Saint-Cloud ;* 3rd edition, London and Paris, July 1, 1814, p. 127.

[2] Is there any need to remind the reader that at this date Caroline had not reached her tenth year ? But, when endeavouring to overwhelm the fallen Napoleonidae, why consider such details ?

Elisa, Bonaparte's sisters, lived at Marseilles in a way in which we should be sorry for our daughters, or lady friends, to live ; that, during the stay that I once made in that town, I have seen them promenade in the evening just as certain girls do in the Rue St. Honoré and at the Palais Royal."

Whereto the local busybody makes a telling reply with her usual absurd knowingness :

" Yes, and that's a fact ! And how can any respectable woman contain herself when she sees these beggar-girls turned into queens and princesses, and acting their parts with such disgusting impudence ? We should have to have no souls, or only be made of mud, not to choke at the idea. Street-walkers and trulls changed into queens ? It's not as if, when they did arrive at high degree, they behaved as queens ; not a bit of it ; what they were at Marseilles, they still were as queens, the only difference being that then they received money, whereas as ' Their Majesties ' they paid it. Fine ' Majesties ' those ! . . ."[1]

[1] *Les soirées de Normandie, ou la femme qui a raison, conversation politique ; Paris Imprimerie royale, chez tous les marchands de vérités,* June 18, 1815, p. 20.

What stupid lampoons these were ! No doubt, in the course of their reigns, Napoleon's sisters did sometimes, and too carelessly, lay themselves open to such charges, but they can assuredly be acquitted of the wholesale carryings-on that are ascribed to them at Marseilles. The plea in their favour comes from one who was severe enough on them in other respects. General de Ricard, whose controversy with Prince Jérôme resulted in his joining the ranks of the pamphleteers under the Empire, and who, moreover, saw much of the Bonaparte girls at Marseilles, admits that "if the behaviour of Napoleon's sisters was irreproachable, in reality it was not so, so far as appearances went." These "appearances" he explains away very plausibly: "I recall certain instances of familiar behaviour, of liberties taken, with young men of Marseilles who were attracted by the charms of these girls. I did not attach any importance to them, but it is possible that these young men may have included in their number some cub who boasted of favours which he had not succeeded in obtaining, or even one who revenged himself for definite refusals by slanders which have clung to the reputation of Letizia's

daughters." Further, "Bonaparte never forgave the Marseillais this."[1]

And, indeed, was he likely to thank them for it?

General de Ricard's evidence furnishes the clue to the scandalous myth. It is clear that Napoleon's sisters did not, at this period of their life (nor at any other, for that matter) set an example of a reserve and a virtuousness which were not then in fashion. Young, pretty, mostly without anyone to keep them in order, suddenly emerging out of misery to shine at Marseilles receptions, is there anything strange in their behaviour not always appearing irreproachable? Besides, the thoughtlessness of their demeanour is not lightly to be denied. Paulette's liaison with the handsome Fréron is a living and charming illustration of this. Stanislas Fréron, born in 1754, was the son of the Fréron whose controversy with the Encyclopædists led to the most biting and outrageous sarcasms. Fréron senior, having lost his wife Jacqueline Guyomar in 1762, remarried, soon afterwards,

[1] General de Ricard, formerly A.D.C. to King Jérôme, *Autour des Bonaparte, fragments de mémoires*, edited by L. Xavier de Ricard, Paris, 1891, p. 110.

Amélie Royou, of Pont-l'Abbé. The bride was sixteen ; the husband forty-eight. At this date young Stanislas was just on nine years of age. When he was old enough to go to college his father sent him, in September, 1771, to Louis-le-Grand. The priests welcomed this new pupil, recommended to them as he was by the fame of the sound conservative doctrine preached by his father in the *Année littéraire*, for the maintenance of which same doctrine 3718 masses were celebrated annually at Louis-le-Grand.[1] As to the excellence of their methods of educating the minds of youngsters, the future of some of their pupils has illustrated that. It was from Louis-le-Grand that issued some of the chief performers in the Terror : Louvet, the Louvet of Faublas, Maximilien de Robespierre, and Fréron, the Fréron of the awful mission to the Midi of the year II. We may add the name of the Marquis of Sade, celebrated in another way.

Stanislas Fréron remained eight years at the college of the Montagne Sainte-Geneviève, but did not shine at the prize-givings which closed

[1] Raoul Arnaud, *Journaliste, sans-culotte, et thermidorien, le Fils de Fréron* (1754–1802), based on unpublished documents, Paris, 1909, p. 43.

the school year. "Lazy and indolent, all persistent work was repugnant to him, and he could not fall in with the ordinary routine."[1] This was an unfortunate preparation for the editorship of the *Année littéraire*, which the death of his father (March 10, 1776) was going to leave on his hands. To begin with, things went without too many hitches, thanks more particularly to young Stanislas' assistants.[2] But in 1781 an incident occurred which had disastrous results for the young controversialist. In a notice of *Jaloux sans Amour* produced at the Comédie-Française, a decidedly mediocre actor in the cast, Denis Deschanet, known as Des Essarts,[3] was roundly slated. The writer of the article, Fréron's assistant Salaün, called Des Essarts the "fat ventriloquist." The comedian thoroughly lost his temper, lodged a

[1] Raoul Arnaud, *Le Fils de Fréron*, p. 47.

[2] As to the management of the *Année littéraire* by Fréron junior and his assistants, see the excellent chapter by Charles Marc Desgranges, *Geoffroy et la critique dramatique sous le Consulat et l'Empire*, Paris, 1897, p. 22 *et seq.*

[3] Des Essarts, born at Langres, Nov. 23, 1737, made his first appearance at the Comédie Française, Oct. 4, 1772, and was admitted to membership April 9, 1778. He died at Bagnères-de-Bigorre, Oct. 8, 1793. Georges Monval, archivist of the Théâtre Français, *Liste alphabétique des sociétaires depuis Molière jusqu'à nos jours;* Paris, 1900, p. 34.

THE VENUS BORGHESE
By Canova

complaint, and brought the matter before the Châtelet, where, one thing leading to another, Fréron's defence ended in a violent outburst, all the more natural on his part since he was an innocent party. Things went badly for him. The *Année littéraire* was suspended and, soon after, a royal writ cancelled Fréron's rights in it, transmitting them to his stepmother,[1] who straightway became his enemy. Outcries and rages, applications and supplications, all were in vain. Stanislas remained dispossessed of what his father bequeathed him, and was forced to seek some other means of livelihood.

It was not till later that he took his revenge, which was not devoid of cleverness. Collaborating as he did for a while with Camille Desmoulins in the *Révolutions de France et de Brabant,* Fréron made use of his position to pillory his enemy, and belaboured with epigrams the "fat ventriloquist," whose complaint had had such unwelcome success.

[1] On July 23, 1791, widow Fréron was imprisoned in the Abbaye prison by order of the municipality of Paris. *Catalogue de la collection de lettres autographes, manuscrits, du Comte de Mirabeau, documents historiques sur la Ligue, la Fronde, la Révolution, etc., de feu M. Lucas de Montigny, conseiller de préfecture du département de la Seine ;* Paris, 1860, No. 1170, *pièce* No. 2, p. 198.

That is why, less than ten years after the affair, Camille Desmoulins' readers came across the following short article in his weekly paper, the taunts whereof betray their author :—

"*Important Notice to Pregnant Women.*

"Philosophy has not as yet gained sufficient acquaintance with the mysteries of nature as to be able to explain away the mass of facts which bear witness to the curious effects of the imagination of pregnant women. These latter ought therefore to be on their guard against things which might give rise to astonishment, repugnance, or fright. Chance has just brought under my notice a curious birth. A woman who wishes her name to be withheld, while allowing me to quote her case in view of the lesson it will teach, has just been delivered, after a troublesome confinement, of a species of shapeless lump, enormous in size, but possessed of hardly any resemblance to humanity except in having a mouth ; the mouth is tremendous. For a long time she racked her brains in vain to recall anything that could have exerted so much influence over her in such a way as to produce such an effect. In time, however,

she remembered, with a shiver of fear, so keen that the recurrence of the vision threw her into convulsions, how once she had reached the Comédie-Française during the fourth act of *Tartuffe*, and had been confronted with the sudden apparition of M. Des Essarts emerging from underneath the table. It is unfortunately beyond doubt that this comedian, whose physique is so lamentably unlike that of any other human being, has struck terror, or aversion, into the hearts of other persons likewise who saw him without being prepared for such a sight, and who had no idea that the French stage could compete with the fairs by having so monstrous a figure to bring forward. Let us therefore suggest to the company that when, in future, M. Des Essarts is to appear, the public should be forewarned thereof on the posters in very large letters. PAROCHEL, accoucheur."[1]

It was a humorous, if tardy, revenge. In the interval Fréron experienced the miseries of a penurious existence. He seems to have endeavoured to free himself from this by associating with those who had good positions at the

[1] *Révolutions de France et de Brabant*, No. 42, Sep. 13, 1790, pp. 141–3.

Court, for we find him haunting the salons, and, in particular, the dining-room of Bertin, the Comptroller-General of Finance. To keep up appearances there he probably had recourse to money-lenders, of the kind who "accommodate" gentlemen's sons. This is doubtless the explanation of his confession in a little revolutionary pamphlet, "I have long since withdrawn out of the range of my creditors' inquisitiveness."[1] It is said, moreover, that he frequented the worst resorts, Mme. Gourdan's private—very private—house, among others, where frolicsome ways were the usual thing.[2]

He paid a heavy penalty for his wild courses, but[3] whether he was struck by the dart of Venus in the hospitable house in the Rue Saint-Sauveur,[4] or at Bertin's orgies in the little

[1] *Etat de l'actif et du passif de tous les journalistes dans le sens de la Révolution ; N° 1, appel nominal des créanciers de l'Orateur du Peuple, précédé de son discours pour les exhorter à la patience* [Paris, 1792], p. 2.

[2] Raoul Arnaud, *Le Fils de Fréron*, p. 78.

[3] *Etat de l'actif et du passif*, etc., p. 5.

[4] The hospitable establishment of Mme. Gourdan, known as the "little Countess," was housed on the site where now is No. 12 of the Rue Saint-Sauveur. Cf. Eugène Defrance, *Vieilles façades parisiennes ; la maison de Madame Gourdan*, unpublished documents concerning the history of manners and customs at the end of the eighteenth century ; Paris, 1908, p. 14.

summer-house, No. 11 in the Rue Basse, we cannot say for certain. Here, at any rate, we find him, descending into the lowest depths of debauchery and the most disreputable shifts, which will explain his friend Barras' expression of disgust later on, "The acquaintances we pick up in revolutionary times are not such as we should choose."[1]

We may certainly believe Barras here; it certainly was not he—at least so he assures us himself—who selected this utterly vicious Fréron to co-operate with him in his Midi mission, this drunkard[2] who cuts a dash in the least respectable localities, with his finely-chiselled features, attractive in spite of irregularity,[3] and his dandified ways, beneath which are already perceptible the sans-culotte Don Juan of 1793, and the leader of the gilded youth of 1794.

From the mire into which he dived he escaped in 1784, though not for long. He regained his footing so far as the *Année littéraire* was con-

[1] *Mémoires de Barras*, I. 104.

[2] "The use of spirits, the elation consequent on the use of them, endowed him with an audacity, a fearlessness, which was almost that of a military hero." (*Mémoires de Barras*, I. 105.)

[3] Raoul Arnaud, *Le Fils du Fréron*, p. 40.

cerned, his stepmother being still the proprietress, and started collaboration in it once more. But this was only an interval. When the Revolution broke out, Stanislas Fréron has fallen back again into the hell of low-class journalism and doubtful jobs, on the watch for a last chance. When the Bastille fell he was there. And then, in the avalanche of pamphlets which descends on Paris, comes his contribution, shrieking louder than the average, bitter to the point of frenzy, furious in its rage—*L'Orateur du Peuple*. "I have read practically all this *Orateur du Peuple* and am still in a state of surprise. What a style, what language, what impudent audacity, and what sinister threats for 1790! The throne was as good as overthrown when those who occupied it were being subjected to taunts brimming over with murderous rage, to insults obscene enough for the lowest of low resorts."[1] And indeed, turning

[1] [Berville and Barrière] *Notice sur la vie de Fréron*, prefacing the republication of the *Mémoire historique sur la réaction royale et les massacres du Midi par le citoyen Fréron, ex-député à la Convention Nationale, et Commissaire du gouvernment dans les départements méridionaux, avec des pièces justificatives et augmenté d'éclaircissements et de documents historiques*; Paris, 1824, pp. ii, iii.

over the pages of Fréron's journal, we find only too much to choose from by way of exemplification. He goes on to declaim that this "queen-criminal combines Messalina's lasciviousness with the Medicis' thirst for blood."[1] Yet in his own way he has a bucolic, and lighter, side to his character which comes to light more particularly when we pay attention to his relations with Camille Desmoulins, his school-fellow at Louis-le-Grand. They had met again at the dawn of the Revolution, and kept together in their participation in all the doings of the mob during 1789. With Danton and Marat they founded the Cordeliers' Club, and, still together, were to be found again in Danton's room that tragic evening of August 10. Becoming thus intimate with Desmoulins, Stanislas did not remain insensible to the gay and child-like charm of his friend's wife, little Lucile, to whom he addressed sprightly, hasty notes, such as the following :—

[1] For the rest, Fréron's policy in the *Orateur du Peuple* can be summed up in a single line—two musket-shots to each village : one for the priest, the other for the squire. Cf. Raoul Arnaud, *Le Fils de Fréron*, p. 114.

" To Lucile Desmoulins, French citizen, at Paris.

" PARIS, *January* 21, 1793.
" Year II of the Republic.

" I beseech the chaste Diana to accept this homage of a quarter of a buck, killed within her domains. Farewell.

" STANISLAS LAPIN."[1]

Stanislas Lapin! That was Fréron's nickname in the Desmoulins circle, at those gay reunions which took place in the little house they owned at Bourg-Egalité, formerly Bourg-la-Reine. There Fréron and Lucile went for long rambles together in the park at night, without any umbrage being taken by Camille, who had entire, and well-justified, confidence in his wife's virtue. Doubtless it was during one of those lazy, misty summer evenings which form one of the charms of the Ile-de-France that the People's spokesman declared his love for the young wife. " In Stanislas Fréron's affection," writes Henri Michel,[2] " which remained an

[1] Henri Michel, *Camille et Lucile Desmoulins ; notes et documents inédits ;* Amiens, 1908, p. 24.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

irreproachable one—there was a tenderness and an exaltation which makes it approximate to a quite different feeling." What doubts can we have as to the nature of his feelings when we read the confidences that Lucile entrusted to her diary? Here are some lines which she writes apropos of these days spent thus at Bourg-la-Reine, lines which depict Stanislas as deeply smitten :—

"Only one thing caused me any heart-searching—Fréron. Every day I see things going farther and farther, and I don't know what to do. I spoke to mother about it; she agreed with me that the best way was to make light of it, and treat it all as a joke, and perhaps that is the most sensible course. What else is there to do? So I thought I was being very discreet when I received him as a friend and nothing but a friend, just as of old."[1]

In August, 1792, Danton sent Fréron to the department of the Moselle to press forward the recruiting. Then follow some tranquil days in Lucile's sentimental existence, but directly

[1] Pierre Bliard, *Fraternité révolutionnaire, études et recits d'après des documents inédits;* Paris, 1908, p. 347.

Fréron is back again the diary confidences recommence :—

" Fréron gives me the feeling that he is always sighing ; how stupid it is of him ! Poor devil ! What hopes are you cherishing ? Quench this insane love in your heart. No, no, my friend ; no, my dear Camille, have no fear ; that friendship, that love so pure, will never exist but for you, and those whom I meet will never be dear to me except in so far as they are friends to you."[1]

Finally, in another entry, Lucile's feelings get the better of her, and she writes, pithily enough :—

" Fréron is always the same, but it makes no difference to me ; let him go mad, if he prefers it."[2]

It was a kind of madness, wherein Fréron was used to give himself a very free hand all his life. As Lucile's advice was not sufficiently explicit, he did not give up hoping and waiting. " Lucile," he writes from Marseilles, in December, 1793, " you are ever present in my thoughts ! Camille

[1] Pierre Bliard, *Fraternité révolutionnaire*, p. 347.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 348.

may complain, he may say anything he pleases ; he will only be acting as all proprietors do." And he ends with this advice—rather strange advice considering what is known of the adventure : " Show my letter to Camille, I don't want to make any secret of it."

He was speaking the truth ; he made a secret of nothing, not even of his worst misdeeds in the Midi. On September 14, 1792, Paris elected him a member of the National Convention. In the impeachment of the King he voted for death within twenty-four hours, and the day that Louis XVI's head fell, he went on a shooting expedition in the woods of Bourg-l'Egalité, as his note to Lucile proves. Little more than a month afterwards (March 9) he was commissioned to go with Barras to the Hautes—and Basses—Alpes, and subsequently to the army in Italy. Wherever he passed, horror and dread dogged his footsteps, with the bloody axe rising and falling throughout these departments.

" Each step I take in the Midi," wrote the Conventionalist Maximin Isnard in the year IV, " I have found traces of the blood which you have spilt. Every living being there accuses you, the very stones call out upon your cruelties,

and wheresoever I meet with a crime, I find Fréron!"[1] To punish Marseilles for its federalist revolt, Fréron caused two hundred persons to be beheaded and requisitioned 12,000 masons to demolish the town, a demand which he thought greatly to his credit, as is clear from his despatch of the Nivôse 6 in the year II. On the 19th he appealed for the deportation of all its inhabitants. On Nivôse 16 he made up the balance-sheet of repressive procedure in Toulon consequent on its having been captured by the English; eight hundred shot; putting the finishing touch to his report on his successes by exclaiming, on Pluviôse 6: "The intriguers are falling like hail under the sword of the Law."[2] "Yes," added Isnard, "I shall terrify France, I shall astound ages to come by my recital of your crimes; you yourself when you look in this trusty mirror will recoil affrighted."[3] The horror of his deeds is summarized in a phrase: "Go, wretch, the whole world will never

[1] Isnard to Fréron, in an appendix to the 1824 reissue of the *Mémoire historique sur la réaction royale*, p. 350.

[2] Isnard to Fréron, *op. cit.*, p. 350.

[3] Cf. Fréron's letters in the *Notice sur la vie de Fréron*, prefacing the reissue of the *Mémoire historique sur la réaction royale*, pp. v–vii.

have produced a monster like unto thee ! "[1] In the end Robespierre turned his attention to these terrible missionaries of the Terror—Barras and Fréron. In Ventôse, year II, they were summoned to Paris, and, on their arrival, lost no time in hastening to the Rue Saint-Honoré to exculpate themselves in the sight of the Incorruptible. That striking page of Barras' *Mémoires*[2] which depicts the two men, humble and obsequious, before Robespierre, silent and eyeing them in his glacial way, is well known. Both were well aware, when paying that call, that their hour was come, that the scaffold was

[1] Philodème, *Le dernier coup de tocsin de Fréron* [Paris, Pluviôse 12, year III], p. 5. A few days after the publication of the *Dernier coup de tocsin* the conventionalist Châles wrote : " A pamphlet entitled *Le dernier coup de tocsin de Fréron* is being attributed to me. I am not the author of it, but I am too loyal, too true a republican, not to declare at the same time that the principles set forth in that pamphlet, written as it is with a fiery pen and a soul brimming over with patriotism, are graven on my heart, and that I shall be their defender till I die." (*Châles, représentant du peuple, à son collègue Fréron ; Paris, Pluviôse* 19, *an III de la République une et démocratique ;* p. 1.) Fréron retorted to this two-fold public statement in *Réponse de l'Orateur du Peuple aux Calomnies du prêtre Châles et compagnie* [Paris, Pluviôse, year III].

[2] We have reprinted this noteworthy passage from Barras' *Mémoires* in our *Robespierre et les femmes, d'après des documents nouveaux et des pièces inédites ;* Paris, 1909, pp. 316 *et seq.*

already being prepared for them for some morning near at hand. Then they hide away somewhere in fear and trembling; and in the session of the Germinal 11th, in which the Convention delivers Danton and Camille Desmoulins over to the guillotine, Fréron is there, and Fréron keeps silence, and Fréron votes against his old school-friend, against the husband of that Lucile who will be a widow tomorrow. That is the sort of man Fréron was.

From Germinal to Thermidor—four months; four months in which will be planned the ambush in which Robespierre is to be trapped. Fréron assists in that, too; with Barras. The guillotiners of Marseilles, the fusilladers of Toulon, are going to give the Incorruptible a lesson in humanity.

With Thermidor 9 comes the fight by the brawlers and howlers of the Convention. Two days more, and omnipotence is conferred on the triumvirate of vice-riddled knaves—Barras, Fréron, Tallien—whom Bonaparte's heel will crush one morning in Brumaire, as a trio of noxious beasts. For the moment, Fréron shines in the front rank, the "sun of justice, humanity's mirror, majesty all-powerful," as a leaflet puts

it in jest.[1] He continues the publication of the *Orateur du Peuple*,[2] he leads the "jeunesse dorée," a reactionary rabble "steeped in vice, prostitution, and the lowest scoundrelism."[3] He must always push on, on the lines he has laid down for himself, and forget whatever Jacobin friendships he has made use of in times gone by; otherwise he will be sharply recalled to order.[4] Thus we find him calling for the demolition of the Hôtel de Ville, "tyrant Robespierre's Louvre," whereto Granet, mindful of the demolitions at Marseilles, rejoins, "Punish the guilty and demolish nothing. The

[1] Ganoi, *A Sa Majesté Fréronienne, Stanislas 1^er^ du nom, très humbles et très respectueuses remontrances de vingt-quatre millions de sans-culottes et d'un million de soldats victorieux* [*Paris*, 1795]; *de l'imprimerie de la rue Joquelet*, p. 7.

[2] This second series of the *Orateur du Peuple* lasted from Fructidor 25, year II (Sept. 11, 1794), to Thermidor 25, year III (Aug. 12, 1795); 157 numbers appeared, forming Vols. VII, VIII, and IX. For the first series, cf. M. D. [Deschiens], advocate of the royal courts at Paris, *Collection de matérieux pour l'histoire de la Révolution France depuis 1787 jusqu'à ce jour; bibliographie des journaux*, Paris, 1829, pp. 412 *et seq.*; and Maurice Tourneux, *Bibliographie de l'histoire de Paris pendant la Révolution Française*, Paris, 1900, III, Nos. 10,508, 10,508a and b, 10,843, and p. 790 among the addenda.

[3] Philodème, *Le dernier coup de tocsin de Fréron*, p. 3.

[4] Fleix, *Grande leçon donnée à Fréron; de l'imprimerie de Pain, passage Honoré* [Paris, 1794].

stones of Paris are no more guilty than those of Marseilles." Always haunted by that maniac's passion, that lust for destruction, he demands that the suburb of Saint-Antoine, in disgrace on account of the rising of the Prairial 1, shall be burnt.

But these are the last of his oratorical exhibitions at Paris. Towards the end of Vendémiaire, year IV, he leaves Paris on a new Midi mission. This time he bears the olive-branch of peace and reconciliation in his hand, a manifestation which he owes to the departments which had been swept by the blood-and-fire of the royalist reaction, and one that he is willing to fulfil. No longer is there any question of burning, fusillading, plundering "with delirious joy";[1] but of calming, appeasing, re-establishing harmony. Accompanied by a dozen individuals, orderlies or secretaries, one of them being Martainville, the ferocious royalist of the Restoration,[2] Fréron sets out, carrying with

[1] Raoul Arnaud, *Le Fils de Fréron*, p. 222.

[2] Concerning Martainville see the excellent study which Paul Ginisty has recently published under the title: *Un pamphlétaire; Martainville*, in the *Revue Hebdomadaire*, May 21, 1910, pp. 300 *et seq.*

him two million livres, only a trifling portion of which did he bring back.[1]

Such was Pauline Bonaparte's first lover.

. . . . . .

How did she come to know him ?

Various versions of their first meeting exist. The most probable states that during his first mission, he had occasion to render some service to Mme. Bonaparte, whom he met two or three times at Bausset, where she was taking refuge during the siege of Toulon, and that he renewed his acquaintance with the family on his return in the year IV. There is no fault to find with these statements, but General Bonaparte's recommendation may be assumed to have carried more weight. For the fact was that Fréron left Paris with the following letter from Napoleon dated Vendémiaire 19 (Oct. 11, 1795) addressed to his relation Mme. Clary,[2] his brother

[1] This second mission of Fréron's in the Midi cost, to be exact, 1,984,099 livres.

[2] Mme. Clary, *née* Rose Sonnis, was the second wife of François Clary. Born at Marseilles, Aug. 30, 1737, she died at Paris, Jan. 28, 1815. Léonce de Brotonne, *Les Bonaparte et leurs alliances ;* Paris, 1901, p. 107.

Joseph's mother-in-law :—

"Fereron [*sic*], who is going on a mission to Marseilles, will hand you this letter ; I beg you, Madame, to show him all the kindness that you would show to myself. You will find him a man very ready to oblige, loyal, and a good sort ; I have told him of the friendly feelings I have for your family, so he will look out for opportunities to make himself useful to you. See that it is due to you that his stay in Marseilles is a pleasant one, and introduce him to Mad. Dejean[1] [i.e. Lejeans] and Pluvinal."[2]

May we not assume that a similar letter was

[1] Mme. Lejeans was François Clary's daughter by his first marriage.

[2] The rest of this curious letter runs as follows. I quote from the original in G. La Caille's collection, published in the *Amateur d'autographes*, 1901, pp. 147, 148 :—

"All is going well here ; the royalists have been brought under, but there is no need to fear that the Terror will return [cancelled, ' that the Terrorists will return '] ; we love that no more than you do. If more important occupations did not keep me at Paris, I should be very glad to come to Marseilles, but the Convention has nominated me to the command of the Army of the Interior, subject to the orders of representative Barras. Farewell, Madame ; my respects to Mme. Pluvinal and to Mme. Sophie, likewise to your niece, and remember me to Clari, assuring him, and the rest of your family, that I shall ever take the same interest in them as I must certainly feel in you.

"Yours, BUONAPARTE."

sent by Bonaparte to Fréron for his mother, and that the Conventionalist presented himself to the family under the auspices of that recommendation? If so, was he not likely to have received a welcome? Besides, it was no longer a home over which anguish and misery were casting their shadows that he entered, but a brilliant and gay interior, transformed into an elegant salon by virtue of the general's remittances from Paris. And there, amid such surroundings, are three young girls to smile on their brother's envoy, a form of pleasure which Stanislas never shunned. "He appealed to women, and, even in his most sinister moments, remained a dandy and a libertine."[1] It was a way he had. At the period of his first mission the Jacobins took notice of his conduct in this respect. At the sitting of Brumaire 18th, year II (Nov. 8, 1793), presided over by Maribon-Montaut, Hébert ascended the tribune of the club. "You have heard Fréron denounced," he said, "I denounce him to you also. Power has intoxicated him, he has abused it. Fréron is no longer anything but an aristocrat and a fop. At Nice his only companions were aristo-

[1] Raoul Arnaud, *Le Fils de Fréron*, p. 183.

cratic women, and his expenses were fearful."[1] Is it surprising that he was struck, immediately, by "la diva Paolina's" languid-lively charm? What she has to give him, at the moment and at the age when "he is experiencing a need to give himself up without reserve to a deep and lasting affection,"[2] is all the graces of a new, fresh, youthful beauty. From Mme. Gourdan's "private" house he has turned to the brothels of Palais-Egalité; Lucile's gay and childlike grace has been denied him; now he abandons himself to this fresh and dazzling mirror of precocious beauty. In his life of fever and fret, of violence and frenzy, here is the peaceful oasis, the blessed resting-place, the haven of love and beatitude, which remain for him to discover in a girl's heart. He has passed his forty years, and the daily struggles tire him now. Not for his temperament are the contests on the grand scale in which, but a short while before, the austere virtue of Maximilien de Robespierre had been triumphant; he remained

[1] F. A. Aulard, *La Société des Jacobins; recueil de documents pour l'histoire du club des Jacobins de Paris;* Paris, 1895, V. 499.

[2] Raoul Arnaud, *Le Fils de Fréron*, p. 337.

a child of the light-hearted, sceptical, hedonist eighteenth century, against which his father had levelled such heavy blows. The golden apple of the gay Hesperides is there before him, and is he likely to hold his hand? Out upon these useless self-denials! And Fréron takes his bite at the beautiful fruit.

The fruit, too, is quite willing to be bitten. Pauline is just on her sixteenth birthday, the age of all enthusiasms, all curiosities, all illusions. She comes from a land where the awakening of love is sudden, and, besides, she lives in such a state of over-excitation, in so feverish an atmosphere, that the most level-headed would find it difficult to remain self-possessed. When misery was but just left behind, in the riotous enjoyment of brand-new prosperity, luxury even, Fréron made his appearance wearing the halo of omnipotence. Of his massacres, of the terror he had struck into departments—what consciousness of this has she? What, except that he has power committed to him? At Marseilles he is the master, the dispenser of pacification by force, the organizer of revolutionary fêtes in which he marches amid the thunder of the drums, the sudden unfurling of

the banners, the harmonious rhythm of the songs, the roar of the cannon-salutes.

Regally omnipotent, his antechambers are full, his reception-rooms are ablaze with light as no ballroom she has ever seen before; a hundred women press round him, striving to attract his notice, lavish with their smiles, at his beck and call, perhaps, or—who knows?—in love.

And then, to prevent her being deceived by these barren appearances, by these fleeting mirages, is Pauline's mother enlightening her? Whether in ignorance or of choice, she acquiesces. There is no doubt she thinks marriage possible. Fréron is not so negligible a suitor as to be dismissed unceremoniously. What matches, in fact, have her children made? Joseph has married a middle-class girl, Julie Clary; Lucien the daughter of the innkeeper Boyer; and Napoleon has just taken to wife a woman whose only possession is a "past." Fréron is an improvement on this—decidedly so. He is basking in the sunshine of Fortune's favours. Was he not Bonaparte's benefactor once, under the walls of Toulon? No obstacle then, so far as the mother is concerned, to a liaison between

Pauline and Stanislas. She is taken about everywhere, accompanies him to the theatre, "on terms of familiarity far from what even our customs consider proper," observes the austere and virtuous Paul, Vicomte de Barras. In fact, he goes further still and roundly states that the two lovers live as husband and wife.[1] The truth is that Pauline has not yet left her mother's house. Her correspondence with Fréron shows that she even remains without seeing him for days together sometimes. She whiles away these wearisome intervals with the help of locks of hair which Stanislas sends her. It is a romance à la Florian in which naïve and puerile little presents are exchanged. "Thank you for thinking to send me some of your hair; I, on my side, send you some of mine. . . ."[2] Later comes a miniature of the leader of the "jeunesse dorée": "Your portrait is a great consolation to me; I spend whole days with

[1] *Mémoires de Barras*, II. 11.

[2] Pauline Bonaparte to Stanislas Fréron, Marseilles, Ventôse 19, year II. *Revue Rétrospective, ou bibliothèque historique contenant des mémoires et documents authentiques, inédits et originaux, pour servir à l'histoire proprement dite, à la biographie, à l'histoire de la littérature et des arts;* Paris, 1834, III. 100.

it, and talk to it as if it was yourself."[1] Burning letters these, studded with protestations of eternal loyalty, according to the prescribed, but rather worn, ritual. "Yes, dear Stanislas, I swear to love but you alone; my heart is not divisible, it gives itself as a perfect whole."[2] Passionate avowals too: "You know how sensitive I am, and you are not ignorant of the extent to which I idolize you."[3] Puerility, likewise, is not absent from this correspondence, which always adheres to the same fervent and tender note. Pauline has fallen into a brook in the course of a picnic: "The river-water which I swallowed has not chilled my heart so far as you are concerned; no doubt it was nectar—if that would increase its warmth."[4] But Fréron was a practical man in love-making, and was not content to play about outside the gate. He formally intimates to Mme. Bonaparte that

[1] Pauline Bonaparte to Stanislas Fréron, Marseilles, Floréal 30, year IV; *Rev. Rétrospective*, III. 102.

[2] Pauline Bonaparte to Stanislas Fréron, Marseilles, Ventôse 19, year IV, *Rev. Rétrospective*, III. 100.

[3] Pauline Bonaparte to Stanislas Fréron, Marseilles, Messidor 23, year IV, *Rev. Rétrospective*, III. 107.

[4] Pauline Bonaparte to Stanislas Fréron, Marseilles, Messidor 14, year IV, *Rev. Rétrospective*, III. 104, 105.

he wishes to marry Pauline. There is some need, too, for him to hasten. Several times by now the Directoire announced his recall; he has been violently attacked in Paris;[1] he will have to leave Marseilles.

Leaving Paris on Ventôse 21, after his marriage with Josephine, to take up his command with the Italy army at Nice, Bonaparte stopped at Marseilles a few days, lodging at the Hôtel Beauvais.[2] There Fréron met him, and their conversation can be guessed by the Conventionalist's subsequent letter. Far from opposing the match, the commander-in-chief approves of it. He has even settled certain details with Fréron of which the latter reminds him some days later in a despatch which throws light on the previous discussion :—

"MARSEILLES, *Germinal* 4, *year IV.*

"Before we parted, my dear Bonaparte, you promised me a letter to your wife; we arranged that you would inform her of my marriage, so that, in the event of me presenting

[1] "Malice engendered by the mission of the year II pursued the delegate of the year IV." (*Mémoires de Barras*, II. 10.)

[2] Paul Gaffarel, *Les Bonaparte à Marseille*, p. 48.

Pauline to her, she should not be taken by surprise.[1] I am despatching an orderly to Toulon to receive the letter that I am to take. Your mother is standing in the way of my haste just a little. I still hope that the wedding may take place at Marseilles within four or five days ; in fact, all arrangements have been made to do this ; quite apart from the possession of that hand which I burn to join with mine, it is probable that the Directoire are going to appoint me to some distant field of action immediately, which will necessitate my prompt departure. If I am obliged to return here I shall be losing precious time, and the Government, which, very naturally, pays but little attention to the affairs of the heart, will find fault with an absence which will delay the consummation of the work entrusted to me. I implore you to write to your mother directly to waive all objections ; tell her to give me a free hand in deciding what date to fix for the happy moment. I have the full consent, I have the promise, of my young

[1] Josephine remained behind at Paris. She did not rejoin her husband till more than four months and a half had elapsed. She reached Milan in the middle of Messidor, year IV. For this journey and her departure, cf. our volume *Joséphine infidèle ;* Paris [1910], pp. 135 *et seq.*

friend; why defer the tying of the knot which so charming a love-story has woven? My dear Bonaparte, help me to overcome this new obstacle; I rely on you.

"My friend, I embrace you, and am yours and hers for life. Farewell.

"S. F."[1]

And yet, twenty-one days later, Fréron leaves Marseilles for Paris unmarried. What has happened? Has Bonaparte changed his mind? Or is it a maternal veto this time? No one knows exactly, but we may conjecture that events have introduced a discordant note by means of intervention of Fréron's mistress. Who was this woman? Where did she come from? A mystery. It has been stated that Fréron had married her, a manifest error, in view of Fréron's own official statement.[2] It has been asserted that she was a dancer at the

[1] *Revue Rétrospective*, III. 100, 101.

[2] By articles IV and V of the decree of Fructidor 5, year II, delegates to the Convention were bound to state their age and civil status. Fréron gave his age as 39 years and 3 months; birth-place, Paris; bachelor: cf. Jules Guiffrey, *Les Conventionnels; listes par départements et par ordre alphabétique des députés et des suppléants à la Convention nationale, dressées d'après les documents originaux des archives nationales avec nombreux détails biographiques inédits;* Paris, 1889, p. 151.

Opera,[1] but this is baseless, and the truth is that we know nothing at all about her. As the latest biographer of the People's Spokesman very sensibly puts it: "Nothing is known concerning this liaison except that it existed; the name of the woman who lived with Fréron is unknown to us; unknown, too, the influence which she may have been able to exert over him. Was she a lady of high degree whom he visited secretly and whom he protected in the evil day, or a woman who had lost her reputation, stirring him up to take vengeance on the world from which she had been expelled? Was she some simple middle-class girl content to love Stanislas for his own sake without asking to share his public life, or a woman of the people in revolt against her former masters, some virago like Marat's mistress,[2] a girl picked up by Fréron

[1] Gilbert Stenger, *La Société française pendant le Consulat* (*Bonaparte, sa famille, le monde et les salons*); Paris, 1905, III. 136.

[2] Marat's mistress, Simone Evrard, who was twenty-six years of age at the date of her liaison with the People's Friend, had, we know, nothing of the virago in her. "Marat's virago" is one of the figures in the mythology of the reaction, and is the property of certain ill-informed historians. See Alfred Bongeart's *Marat, l'Ami du Peuple;* Paris, 1865, I. 341; and F. Chévremont's *Jean-Paul Marat, esprit politique, accompagné de sa vie scientifique, politique, et privée;* Paris, 1880, II. pp. 20 *et seq.*

in a gin-palace during one of his nights of debauchery? The most painstaking researches among the archives, careful reading of contemporary journals and of private correspondence, have revealed nothing. It is a gap of some importance in our knowledge of Fréron's career. And yet—does not history depend for its charm on a little mysteriousness, and, were it possible to know all, to learn everything without effort, would it not become as arid and as unpoetic as the sciences in which reasoning reigns supreme?"[1]

It is established, however, that this woman had two children by Fréron. She herself informed either Mme. Bonaparte or the General. Stanislas certainly undertook to arrange matters, since in Pauline's letters a reference to this mistress occurs in connexion with the measures that Fréron proposes to take with regard to her. "I have just received your letter," writes Pauline; "it has affected me deeply on account of what you say of that woman." What threats has the forsaken mistress made? Is the fickle lover being terrorized with menaces of vengeance and public exposure? Pauline says further,

[1] Raoul Arnaud, *Le Fils de Fréron*, pp. 141, 142.

"I shall be very ill at ease till I know what is going to happen to this woman." Then comes a pleasing touch of genuine feeling: "I put myself in her place and sympathize with her."[1] Six weeks later the affair is not yet settled. "I am not going to say anything more about your mistress," writes Pauline; "all that you tell me reassures me. I know the uprightness of your heart, and approve of the arrangements you are making with regard to her."[2] But Bonaparte's attitude towards Fréron became unfavourable. The whole family leagued themselves together against the marriage, even Josephine, who had never seen Pauline and did not know Fréron. The General even wrote to Joseph that he is unwilling to hear anything further about this match. Does he not, in fact, issue orders to Pauline accordingly? But is this to be his final decision? Suppose Pauline writes to him? beseeches him? She suggests the idea to Fréron, but Fréron rejects it—why? Here is her letter, nevertheless, tear-stained and

[1] Pauline Bonaparte to Stanislas Fréron, Marseilles, Floréal 30, year IV; *Revue Retrospective*, III. p. 102.

[2] Pauline Bonaparte to Stanislas Fréron, Marseilles, Messidor 14, year IV; *Ibid.*, p. 104.

still witness to the heat of the fever which dictated it before it went its way to the Italian battlefield to find the victor of Mondovi :—

"I have received your letter; it has caused me the greatest pain; I had not expected this change on your part. You have given your consent to my union with Fréron. After the promises you have made me to overcome all obstacles, my heart gave itself up to those cherished hopes and I thought of him as the man in whom my fate met its fulfilment. I send you his last letter; you will see that all calumnies with which he is charged are not true.

"As for myself, I choose a life of wretchedness rather than marrying without your consent and incurring your curse. You, my dear Napoleon, for whom I have ever had the tenderest of friendly feelings, if you were witness of the tears which your letter caused me to shed, you would be touched; I am sure of it. It is on you that my happiness depends, yet you force me to renounce the only person whom I can love. Although I am young, there is firmness in my character; I feel that it is impossible

for me to give up Fréron after all the promises that I have made never to love any but him ; yes, I shall keep them ; no one in the world will be able to prevent me shutting my heart to all but him and receiving his letters and answering them and repeating that I shall love none but him. I know my duty too well to set it aside ; but I know that I do not know how to change as circumstances bid me.

" Farewell, that is what I have to say to you ; may you be happy, and, amidst your brilliant victories and every good fortune, think sometimes of a life that is stricken through with grief, and of tears that are shed every day by

" PAULINE BONAPARTE."[1]

Is this letter just such as Fréron would have had her write ? What deductions are to be made from it ? Pauline will not marry Fréron, but she will remain faithful to him. What does that mean ? She will obey, and she will disobey Bonaparte at one and the same time ? But quibbles are not in his line, nor is this kind of dialectic one that he cares for. Well then, is the above the letter of a woman hopelessly in love ? If so, she would pay no heed to fraternal

[1] *Revue Rétrospective*, III. 108–109.

opposition. What ! he to decide her life, her happiness, to cancel *ex cathedrâ* what was going to become the lode-star of her existence, and she acquiesces ? She bows to the decision ? She consents to the banishment of her sweetest dreams ? She is in love, and does not rise swiftly up to cry : Who but I shall decide between my love and me ? Yes, but—she is sixteen, she is aware that Napoleon is the dispenser of the family's prosperity, the head of the clan, recognized, accepted ; from him comes all : comfort and security to-day ; and to-morrow, who knows ?

That is settled, then. Fréron must give way.

A final point remains to be examined. What reasons did Bonaparte give for breaking off the match ? Barras does not hesitate to attribute the rupture to the intervention of Fréron's mistress. Not that he blames this intervention, but only the fact of Napoleon's taking notice of it. " Thus," he exclaims, " it is in the name of morality that he commits the revolting immorality of refusing to let his sister marry a man who has been her lover, reserving her for some distinguished general or for some Italian prince who will not deem this sort of thing be-

neath them."[1] Yet in view of this virtuous declamation, the question may be put: Which match was, in the year IV, the more brilliant one for Pauline—that with a man without a reputation, the unknown soldier Leclerc, or that with the leader of a victorious and powerful political party, Fréron? The evidence is irresistible; Bonaparte's motive was disinterested. Behind his refusal there was, perhaps, a loftier reason—Fréron's ambiguous celebrity. Could he, in cold blood, receive into the family circle, and bind up with his own future, the man who personified all the atrocities, the guilt, the horror which was associated with the Terror? Was it not in consideration of Fréron's immorality that he preferred the immorality which makes Barras so indignant? But whatever his reasons may have been, who would not commend them? who would not praise him for keeping at a distance from his own fresh, unstained fame the befouled notoriety of this Don Juan of the Terror? A disreputable, vicious, abandoned man who depended on cynicism for his effectiveness and on low intrigue for his influence?

. . . . . .

[1] *Mémoires de Barras*, II. p. 113.

So ended the love-story of Pauline and handsome Stanislas. "My good friend, I love you more than myself," she wrote to him, Floréal 30, year IV. A year later, to the day, she became "Citoyenne Leclerc."

CHAPTER II

PAULINE MARRIED

AFTER Fréron's dismissal, another sighing lover presents himself—Andoche Junot, the future Duc d'Abrantès. At this time he was the General's aide-de-camp, and, as for Pauline, "he loved her passionately, deliriously."[1] Later, he admitted that it was not reciprocated. "She never loved me," he confessed to his wife somewhat pathetically.[2] He made matrimonial overtures to Bonaparte, alleging he was going to inherit 20,000 francs upon his father's death. The General answered very wisely that Junot senior was not yet dead and that the net profit at present was nil, concluding, "You have nothing, she has nothing; what is the total? Nothing."[3] And things

[1] *Mémoires de Madame la duchesse d'Abrantès, ou souvenirs historiques sur Napoléon, la Révolution, le Directoire, le Consulat, l'Empire et la Restauration;* Paris, 1835, I. 197.

[2] *Mémoires de Madame la duchesse d'Abrantès,* IV. 200.

[3] *Ibid.,* I. 197.

went no further. It is curious that Junot subsequently became a member of a family which the General had, at one time, thoughts of marrying into—the Permons. Bonaparte had, in fact, proposed to Mme. Permon that he should marry her; her son, Pauline; and her daughter, either Louis or Jérôme. Mme. Permon had a hearty laugh at his expense. "Really, my dear Napoleon," she told him, "you are quite the high-priest nowadays, marrying off everybody, even the children."[1] Mme. Permon remained a widow, and the proposed bride of Louis or Jérôme became the Duchesse d'Abrantès. But did Bonaparte entertain the idea of making Marmont do instead, as the latter boldly asserts in his Memoirs?[2] The flattering way in which he speaks of himself will excuse us hesitating to believe him, especially since he boasts he re-

[1] *Mémoires de Madame la duchesse d'Abrantès*, I. 302.

[2] *Mémoires du Maréchal Marmont, duc de Raguse, de* 1792 *à* 1841; Paris, 1857, I. 287. "It is to be desired," wrote Baron Henri Jomini, "that M. de Raguse had been rather less pleased with himself and rather more indulgent towards his colleagues. His memoirs would have been more valuable." (*Catalogue d'une précieuse collection de lettres autographes et de documents historiques de Napoléon I^er^, de sa famille, de ses maréchaux, et de ses ministres;* Paris, June, 1891, *pièce* No. 157, sold for fcs. 13.50.)

fused Pauline's hand. "I have more reason to congratulate myself thereon than to repent," he says. Indeed!

It is certain that there was no lack of suitors, several of them possible ones. It is as well, however, to begin by striking General Duphot's name off the list,[1] the one who was assassinated at Rome, Nivôse 8, year VI. He was betrothed, not to Pauline, but to her sister-in-law Désirée Clary, who became the wife of Marshal Bernadotte.[2] But to replace him, we find M. de La Salcetté, a gentleman of Dauphiné, whose friendship with the Bonapartes dated back to their stay at Marseilles. "Mlle. Bonaparte's beauty was a great temptation to him, but her deficiencies in the more solid qualities, and the general behaviour of the Bonaparte family, in which education was more honoured in the breach than in the observance, attracted him

[1] The confusion was made by Rabbe, Vieilh de Boisjolin, and Sainte-Preuve, in the *Biographie Universelle et portative des contemporains;* Paris, 1834, I. 521.

[2] Concerning this engagement, so tragically broken off, see Baron Hochschild, *Désirée, reine de Suède et de Norvège;* Paris, 1888, pp. 25 *et seq.;* and the Comtesse d'Armaillé, *Une fiancée de Napoléon; Désirée Clary, reine de Suède* (1777–1860); Paris, 1897, pp. 55 *et seq.*

less."[1] More prudent, probably, in his eyes, to be contented with less dainty, and more virtuous, a morsel. So, too, with one Mr. Billon, soap-manufacturer, "a rich man who would have married her if her mother had agreed to the match."[2] With all respect to the historian who makes this statement, the soap-maker was not so rich as was believed. Here is a contradiction from Napoleon himself, in a letter addressed to Joseph : " A citizen named Billon, an acquaintance of yours I am told, asks for Paulette's hand. This citizen is not wealthy. I have written to mother to abandon the idea."[3] Moreover, he is himself going to make arrangements, having grown tired of this intervention entailed by his sister's caprices or her adorers' claims. Besides, who better fitted than he to choose a husband for Pauline ? A few months later all is settled.

Towards the end of Floréal, Mme. Bonaparte, Elisa, and Pauline rejoined the General, now

[1] Joseph Turquan, *Souverains et grandes dames ; les sœurs de Napoléon ; les princesses Elisa, Pauline, et Caroline, d'après les témoignages des contemporains ;* Paris, n.d., p. 117.

[2] Gilbert Stenger, *La société française pendant le Consulat,* III. 136.

[3] Baron Larrey, *Madame Mère* (*Napoleonis Mater*), I. 241.

victorious over Austrians and Piedmontese, at Milan; it was at the château of Montebello, three leagues from Milan on the Como road, that the family took up their quarters. Amidst the new-found luxury of this improvised court, its troop of showily-dressed officers, its crowd of suitors and guests, they could make the most of the astounding freak of fate which had thrust prosperity on them. Their reunion there offers Bonaparte an opportunity for settling troublesome questions. Elisa's marriage with Bacciochi is an accomplished fact; but what to do with Pauline is still a problem. The solution is that she shall marry one of the army's excellent soldiers, Leclerc, promoted to be brigadier-general by a decree of the Directoire, Floréal 7, year V. This is to be his wedding present; fourteen days later, in the chapel of the château of Montebello, dedicated to St. Francis in 1744, by Cardinal Puteobonello,[1] Leclerc marries Pauline.

The bridegroom was twenty-five years old at the time, having been born at Pontoise,[2]

[1] Paul Marmottan, *Elisa Bonaparte;* Paris, 1898, pp. 298, 299.

[2] Fernand Bournon, *Actes d'état-civil de personnages célèbres, 1ère série;* Paris, 1907, p. 9.

March 17, 1772; a doorkeeper's son, it is said —and believed—at Paris.[1] But the truth is that the father's status was, although a modest one, somewhat better than that. Connected with the salt warehouse at Pontoise, Jean Paul Leclerc had been a King's Councillor;[2] and brought up six children respectably, whose good fortune is assured, thanks to Pauline's husband, and who are worthy of their name. Emmanuel Leclerc enlisted in 1791, and his profession was thenceforward that of a soldier. With the help of the entries against his name at the Ministry of War we can trace his career, step by step, though by no means so intimately as could Mr. Lewis Goldsmith, who is grieved to have to state that, during the Revolution, Leclerc picked up an income from the courtesans of the Palais-Egalité. If we believe him, at the time of Vendémiaire 13, "this man was a —— of the

[1] Comte Remacle, *Bonaparte et les Bourbons, relations secrètes des agents de Louis XVIII à Paris sous le Consulat* (1802–1803); with introduction and notes; Paris, 1899, p. 237.

[2] Fernand Bournon, *Actes d'état-civil de personnages célèbres*, p. 9.

lowest type."[1] But what was Lewis Goldsmith himself ?

Physically Leclerc may have pleased Pauline. Appiani's fine portrait of him depicts a narrow bust, a high forehead, a delicate lip, well-shaped nose, eyes somewhat lifeless, but the general impression bears some resemblance to Bonaparte's, only fairer, more youthful, less serious. " Small, slender, lean, with a figure slightly awry, pleasant and straightforward," writes Desaix in his diary.[2] Norvins, Leclerc's secretary at Hayti, completes the picture : " General Leclerc was short but well made, and he combined strength with gracefulness ; his features were attractive, his glance keen and quick, his

[1] One of Leclerc's sisters, Louise Aimée Julie, married (Nov. 12, 1801) Louis Nicolas Davout, the future Duke of Auerstaat and Prince of Eckmühl. " The marshal's wife," writes the Countess Potocka concerning her, " was an admirable woman, whose beauty was of the severe type. Educated as she had been at Mme. Campan's, she had acquired refined manners and the conventions of good society, which were lacking in her husband ; but she did not know how to make herself beloved, for she had little geniality." (*Mémoires de la Comtesse Potocka* (1794–1820) ; edited by Casimir Stryienski ; Paris, 1897, p. 161.) Concerning Leclerc's brothers and sisters, cf. Léonce de Brotonne, *Les Bonapartes et leurs alliances*, p. 31.

[2] *Notes de voyage du Général Desaix ; Suisse et Italie*, 1797, in the *Carnet de la Sabretache*, Nov., 1898, p. 706.

THE STATUE OF GENERAL LECLERC AT PONTOISE

face always lit up by expression and movement. He was a fluent speaker."[1] The foregoing well explains the phrase habitually used by Pauline in referring to him; she called her husband "my little Leclerc."[2]

For this unexpected marriage, "garrison marriage,"[3] Fouché calls it, reasons have naturally been given which do no credit either to Bonaparte or to Leclerc—not to mention Pauline. Baron Mounier is particularly well informed on this point, according to his own account. "The Leclerc marriage came about thus," he declares in his self-satisfied way. "General Bonaparte was working in his room at Milan; Leclerc was on the staff and took advantage of a screen to express his love for Pauline in rather too unceremonious a fashion. General Bonaparte hears a noise, gets up and sees. The marriage was celebrated without losing a moment."[4]

[1] Quoted by A. P. de Forges, departmental chief at the War Office, *Le Général Leclerc (Victoire-Emmanuel) beau-frère de Napoléon 1er;* Paris, 1869, p. 33.

[2] *Mémoires de Madame la duchesse d'Abrantès*, IV. 191.

[3] *Mémoires de Joseph Fouché, duc d'Otrante, ministre de la police générale;* Paris, 1824, II. p. 44.

[4] Comte d'Hérisson, *Le cabinet noir; Louis XVII, Napoléon, Marie-Louise;* Paris, 1887, p. 130.

It has been remarked concerning this story that there is "nothing improbable in it."[1] It may as well be asked what there is probable in it. How are we to believe that Bonaparte let himself be befooled and insulted in this way? How are we to admit that Leclerc would have dared to act thus under his chief's nose? We should be attributing a degree of complaisance to the latter which is certainly out of keeping with probability. Furthermore, those who retail these little anecdotes have omitted to make this one harmonize with what we know of Leclerc's character. No doubt he was a very highly-strung man,[2] but to endow him with "a rough and brutal personality" is going a good deal farther. A final touch is given by a Prussian,[3] though his version really contains nothing but what Peltier, that immaculate royalist, affirmed, which makes out Leclerc to be jealous to a stagy degree. He relates, as

[1] Henri d'Alméras, *Pauline Bonaparte;* Paris, n.d., p. 53.

[2] *Procès-verbal d'ouverture et d'embaumement du corps du général en chef et capitaine général de Saint-Domingue*, published in the *Gazette nationale ou le Moniteur universel;* Nivôse 17, year XI (Jan. 7, 1803), pp. 430, 431.

[3] A. Laquiante, *Un hiver à Paris sous le Consulat* (1802–1803), *d'après les lettres de J. F. Reichardt;* Paris, 1896, p. 258.

fact, that Bonaparte's brother-in-law grew so jealous of Lannes, who was flirting with Paulette, that he actually broke a chair across his back.[1]

In that case Fouché was right ; Pauline could only have had the deepest, and most thoroughly justified, aversion for her husband.[2]

However, the marriage took place,[3] more-

[1] Lefebvre Saint-Ogan, *L'Envers de l'Epopée*, in the *Nouvelle Revue*, March 1, 1910, p. 53.

[2] *Mémoires de Joseph Fouché, duc d'Otrante*, III. 43.

[3] Here is the text of Pauline's and Leclere's marriage-deed, in full :—

"ARMY OF ITALY

FRENCH REPUBLIC

Liberty Equality

Alexandre Berthier

General of Division. Chief of the General Staff.

This day, Prairial 1 ['Germinal' cancelled] year V of the French Republic, 10 a.m.

Before me, General of Division, Chief of the Staff of the Army of Italy, have presented themselves :—

Emmanuel le Clerc, major, legitimate son of Jean-Paul Le Clerc and of Marie Louise Musquinet, born at Pontoise, March 17, 1772, Brigadier-General of the Army of the Rhine, on the one part.

And, on the other, citizeness Paulette Bonaparte, born at Ajaccio, in Corsica, Oct. 2, 1780, legitimate daughter of ['the late,' cancelled] Charles Bonaparte and of Letitia Ramolini, the same being provided with the papers prescribed by law, and having affirmed that they had entered into no marriage-contract hitherto, they have declared themselves willing

over, all evidence hitherto produced testifies to the affection Pauline felt for the husband Napoleon gave her.

In fact, after their return from Italy, Paulette and Leclerc received a visit from the academician Arnault, author of *Marius à Minturnes*,[1] at their charming house in the rue de la Ville-l'Evêque,[2] and of his visit Arnault has left this

jointly to enter into a marriage-agreement in conformity with the laws of the French Republic, and have signed with us.

ALEX. BERTHIER. P. BONAPARTE.

V. E. LECLERC.

We, Chief of the General Staff of the Army of Italy, certify that the above declaration has been affixed, in conformity with the law, to the door of the General Staff office for the period decreed by the law, and that up to this day, Prairial 20, there has been no protest against it."

This piece has been published in the *Carnet historique et littéraire ;* 1899, III. 44, and in the *Intermédiaire*, LIV. Dec. 30, 1906, No. 1134, col. 958.

[1] *Marius à Minturnes*, tragedy in three acts, staged for the first time at the Comédie-Française, May 19, 1791. Hippolyte Lucas, *Histoire philosophique et littéraire du Theâtre-Français depuis son origine jusqu'à nos jours ;* Paris, 1843, p. 421. Napoleon admired the play so much that he bequeathed the writer 100,000 francs in his will. Comte de Las Cases, *Le mémorial de Saint-Hélène ;* Paris, n.d., edit. Garnier, IV. 643.

[2] The rue de la Ville-l'Evêque was a turning out of the rue de la Madeleine which ended at the rue Verte. F. M. Marchant, *Le conducteur de l'étranger à Paris, contenant la description des palais, monumens, édifices, musées et bibliothéques de cette capitale ; l'indication de ses académies, sociétés savantes,*

significant account: "I found Leclerc," he says, "at home and intoxicated with happiness; amorous and ambitious, and both with reason. His wife seemed to me very happy too, not only because she was married to him, but also just because she was married. Her new position had not increased her seriousness, as was the case with her husband; he seemed more serious than usual. But as for her, she was just as much of a madcap as ever."[1] Leclerc had not long to enjoy these madcap ways, for, leaving Paulette at Paris, he went back to serve in the Italy army. This absence Paulette made some use of, completing her education, so far as she could, both socially and academically. Certain details which were neglected, or even unknown, in Corsica, were of importance at Paris. To acquire this elemen-

écoles, établissements de bienfaisance; de ses curiosités, spectacles et amusements, précédé d'un précis sur l'histoire de Paris et d'une instruction aux étrangers sur la manière d'y suivre leurs affaires et d'y vivre convenablement à leur fortune; suivi de la description des environs de Paris, avec l'indication des fêtes champêtres, et terminé par la liste des rues, places, quais, etc., par tenants et aboutissants; Paris, 1816, p. 30 *in fine.*

[1] A. V. Arnault, *Souvenirs d'un Sexagénaire,* new edition, with preface and notes by Auguste Dietrich; Paris, n.d., III. 305.

tary knowledge, "La diva Paolina" entered the "pension" founded by Mme. Campan at Saint-Germain, then a fashionable one. Little Caroline was staying there at the time; Désirée, Bernadotte's wife, was trying to learn spelling there; Hortense de Beauharnais was winning golden opinions, and not much else. A whole bevy of princesses, duchesses, and marshals' wives, of the Empire, were enjoying themselves there amidst the rustle of skirts and the limpid echoes of youthful laughter. Pauline seems to have been industrious. "Citizeness Leclerc," writes Mme. Campan, Pluviôse 1, year VII, to Joseph Bonaparte, "has been with us six months. She has made astonishing progress in all respects, and she did not know how to read or write."[1] Here we must be inclined to suspect Mme. Campan's zeal in defence of the excellence of her teaching. "Neither read nor write"? But what about the love-letters to Fréron in the year IV? The pupil, however, interrupted her studies in order to lie in, giving birth to the child who was named Louis Napoléon Dermide,

[1] *Inventaire des autographes et des documents historiques composant la collection de M. Benjamin Fillon;* Paris, 1877, *pièce* No. 1136.

thus uniting the name of his uncle with that of one of the heroes in the latter's beloved "Ossian." Born in 1798, the child was baptized March 21, 1801.[1] Pauline had only a few months longer to stay in France.

Vendémiaire 16, year X, the First Consul recalled Leclerc, then near the Spanish frontier, to Paris. The reconquest of Hayti, where the revolt of the negroes had been successful, had been decided on, and Leclerc was put in command.

According to Bourrienne, the First Consul's advice to Leclerc, on giving him instructions, were, "Here you have a fine chance to get rich. Go, and don't worry me any more with your everlasting demands for money."[2] The fortune Leclerc left, concerning which we shall have something to say later, was in accordance with this anecdote recorded by Napoleon's former secretary.

Pauline felt no pleasure at hearing the news: "Oh! I shall die before I get there!" she complained.[3] But she was going to give the lie

[1] Léonce de Botonne, *Les Bonaparte et leurs alliances*, p. 31.

[2] *Mémoires de M. de Bourrienne*, IV. 246.

[3] *Mémoires de Madame la duchesse d'Abrantès*, IV. 191.

to that gloriously. She would decidedly have preferred to remain at Paris, but Napoleon, already an adherent of the principle that he was to formulate in 1807: "I am accustomed to see wives prefer to be with their husbands,"[1] issued a "pressing invitation" to her to accompany Leclerc.[2] In the reports of Louis XVIII's secret agents at Paris, during the Consulat, there is a comment on this tale which is worth noting. In it we see, for the first time, the First Consul rebuking his sister for questionable behaviour, and, likewise for the first time, there is a reference to Pauline's lovers. Its date is July 17, 1802, so that the agent is retailing ancient history :—

"When he [i.e. Bonaparte] sent General Leclerc to Hayti, Mme. Leclerc, his sister, had no desire to accompany her husband. The First Consul declared that while Leclerc was making war and money at Hayti, it was not

[1] The Emperor to Joseph, King of Naples; Fontainebleau, Nov. 13, 1807. Archives nationales, series AF, IV, carton 874. Baron A. du Casse, *Supplément à la Correspondance de Napoléon Ier;* Paris, 1887, p. 70. Léon Lecestre, *Lettres inédites de Napoléon Ier (an VIII—1815);* Paris, 1897, I. 125, *pièce* No. 197.

[2] *Mémoires de Madame la duchesse d'Abrantès,* IV. 191.

his intention that she should remain behind at Paris to play the coquette and amuse herself with her lovers. Mme. Leclerc alleged that her health was unequal to it. Bonaparte obtained a certification from his doctor that she was in a condition to make the journey. She objected that, she being pregnant,[1] and the roads of Lower Brittany so bad, an accident might occur. Bonaparte answered that he would provide against that ; and, as a matter of fact, had her carried in a litter for more than forty leagues, and in this way compelled her to accompany her husband."[2]

It is a curious thing that this note is to be found in Fouché's *Memoirs*, briefly summarized but almost identical in its wording :—[3]

" When she was ill and refused to follow Leclerc on his expedition to Hayti, she was carried in a litter, by Napoleon's orders, on board the admiral's ship."

[1] The agent's memory seems to have played him false here, seeing that Pauline gave birth to Dermide in 1798.

[2] Comte Remacle, *Bonaparte et les Bourbons ; relations secrètes des agents de Louis XVIII à Paris sous le Consulat*, p. 69.

[3] *Mémoires de Joseph Fouché, duc d'Otrante*, II. 44.

Resistance was ineffectual, then. On Brumaire 30, on the ship the *Océan*, the Staff put out to sea from Brest. The fate of Hayti was going to be decided.[1]

This is not the place to tell the story of that ferocious war with savages, that fight against an enemy whose fury extended to cannibalism. It is within narrower limits that our researches must be confined; at a nearer horizon must our investigations come to a halt. What prefaced the contest for the reconquest of this blissful, fertile island which, in 1789, was yielding France a milliard a year,[2] is well known; the manœuvres of the English to compass the wresting of the colony from the Republic;[3]

[1] For the Hayti expedition, cf. the documents published by Dalmas, *Histoire de la Révolution de Saint-Domingue, depuis le commencement des troubles jusqu'à la prise de Jérémie et du môle Saint-Nicolas par les Anglais, suivie d'un mémoire sur le rétablissement de cette colonie;* Paris, 1814, two vols.; General baron Pamphile de Lacroix, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la révolution de Saint-Domingue;* Paris, 1820, two vols.; Castonnet des Fossés, *La perte d'une colonie; la révolution de Saint-Domingue;* Paris, 1893.

[2] Frédéric Masson, *Notice sur le portrait du Général Leclerc par Appiani, appartenant à la Duchesse d'Albuféra,* in the *Carnet de la Sabretache,* Jan. 31, 1902, p. 1.

[3] "Towards the end of April [1802] the district seemed pacified, and some months later General Leclerc stored

the fire at the Cape just when the fleet brought its broadside to bear on the roadstead, Pluviôse 16, year X. Three months of fierce hand-to-hand fighting reduced the colony once more under French control. To the spell of war succeeded a spell of organization,[1] without delay. Was this a time when Leclerc was racking his brains as to how to ruin the colony by means of exactions ?[2] That was the tale current at Paris in circles which were hostile to the new Government. It obtained a very curious, and very persistent, currency. "He [Leclerc] appears to have looked after his own affairs very well in the course of a very brief governorship," writes the German Reichardt on January 11, 1803; "his widow is supposed to have become

45,000 muskets in the arsenals, accruing from the disarmament of the negroes ; he reckoned to acquire 12,000 to 15,000 more. Almost all were of English make." (A. P. de Forges, *Le Général Leclerc*, p. 25.)

[1] "This was a period of quiet, of taking up work once again. Tillage began to make headway and the outlook seemed bright. All this was due to repression by armed force, and also to Leclerc's ingenuity." (Dr. Magnac, *L'Expédition du Général Leclerc à Saint-Domingue ; la prise du Cap*, in the *Carnet*, Sept., 1904, p. 367.)

[2] Comte Remacle, *Bonaparte et les Bourbons ; relations secrètes des agents de Louis XVIII à Paris sous le Consulat*, p. 140. This report charges Leclerc with stealing sugar from the colonists to sell it for his own advantage.

the richest member of her family; and the wealth she has inherited from the general, whom she followed very reluctantly, will, it is said, speedily console her."[1] Far from improving Pauline's position, the "wealth she inherited" according to rumour left her worse off than before. Leclerc at his death left his wife 246,000 francs in personalty, and 325,000 francs in real estate. Including debts to him, the whole amounted to 700,000 francs.[2] It must be admitted that the colony's "ruination" by Leclerc was run on very cheap lines.

The peace which proved so difficult to obtain in 1802 did not last long. The second day after the arrest of Toussaint-Louverture,[3] who was

[1] A. Laquiante, *Un hiver à Paris sous le Consulat*, p. 258.

[2] Comte Remacle, *Bonaparte et les Bourbons; relations secrètes des agents de Louis XVIII à Paris sous le Consulat*, p. 140.

[3] Toussaint-Louverture, whose real name was Toussaint Bréda, had been a slave belonging to the Comte de Noé, and owed his nickname to the brilliance of his early successes, which had caused the French Commissary Polverel to write, "Mais cet homme fait *ouverture* partout!" (A. P. de Forges, *Le Général Leclerc*, p. 17.) Concerning Toussaint-Louverture's captivity and last years in France, see the curious and important, and previously unpublished, documents printed by Jean Destrem, *Les déportations du Consulat et de l'Empire, d'après des documents inédits; index biographique des déportés*; Paris, 1885, pp. 497 *et seq.*

organizing a new negro revolt, the insurrection burst out suddenly. So, too, did the yellow fever, as if in co-operation. The hospitals were filled with sufferers ; the roads were strewn with corpses. The negro hordes drove the decimated troops from their last trenches. The savage energy of the natives and the epidemic were, together, irresistible. Pauline had to fly from the Cape, where she had taken up her quarters to begin with, and take refuge in the Tortuga islet. How cruel were the disillusions that awaited her ! Her mind once reconciled to the idea of departure, she abandoned herself to dreams of a fairy kingdom, imagining herself already queen in a marvellous land, where shone a miraculous sun on landscapes that bordered on the impossible. On her arrival she found actualities disappointing. The negroes were not of a Paul-and-Virginia type, but cruel, crafty and treacherous, whose idea of war included ambuscades and men-traps ; the climate torrid and prostrating ; towns reduced to cinders, the bush to ashes ; and uninhabited ground ablaze. It was a country in ruins. Where now were the charming dreams of which she had prattled when paying calls on Mme. Permon and on

Mme. Junot? Where now were the hours of divine enjoyment in the even swing of the hammock, fanned by the waving, rustling palms? Where now were the miraculous white-and-gold palaces of her day-dreams, set in valleys amid springs and gigantic creepers, facing mountains all aglow under a tropical sun? Instead, there were hospitals to visit, long rows of truckle-beds, lines of dying fever-patients; or lazar-houses to pace through, consoling the sufferers, while the consoler's teeth chattered at the thought of dying as they were dying. Yet from Paris Pauline will receive Napoleon's encouragement: that her loving relations feel her absence keenly, that her name is ever on their lips;[1] what is that compared to the resonant phrases which promise her immortality and fame? "I am very pleased with Paulette's conduct," writes Napoleon to Leclerc. "Well may she have no fear of death, seeing that she would die glorious, dying amidst the army and assisting her husband. All earthly things fade

[1] Autograph letter from Admiral Villaret-Joyeuse to General Leclerc, Paris, Messidor 11, year X: 2½ pp. 4to, *Catalogues d'autographes Etienne Charavay;* Paris, 1894, offered at 20 francs.

quickly away, save the judgment on us which we leave graven in history." This might have been meant for Leclerc himself, a prophetic farewell from the First Consul, for, quite suddenly, Pauline's husband is struck down ; first yellow fever, then death. During the night of Brumaire 10–11, year XI, he is in the grasp of the last agonies. In this torrid climate there is no time to spend in eloquence and meditation. Four hours after the general's death, the doctors arrive to institute a *post-mortem*. Five of them draw up a report beside the eviscerated body, which lies on the table in the principal hall of the *Palais national* in the island of Tortuga. This mournful, but unavoidable, business has lasted from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. The body is taken out of the bath of aromatic herbs and spirits-of-wine in which it has been laid for maceration purposes and they proceed to the embalming : " The body has been enveloped in an infinite number of bindings of two fingers' breadth, strongly impregnated with balm ; each finger, each limb separately, right to the top of the head, where the bandaging ends in a little cap, underneath which is some of Mme. Leclerc's hair, placed there at her request as a pledge of

conjugal affection, in exchange for some of her husband's, for which she asked."[1] Now that the corpse has been reduced to the state of a mummy it is wrapped in its cerecloth and sewn up in a shroud; "in which state we laid the body in a lead coffin with tears and lamentations." The empty spaces are filled with cotton and sweet-smelling powders, the leaden cover is soldered on, and this inner coffin is inserted in a double bier. The whole weighs nine hundred *livres*. And outside, the cannon of the island batteries were awakening the seaward echoes with their funeral volleys.

. . . . . .

Now, how did Pauline behave at Hayti? In no very edifying way, judging by general report. According to Barras, she subjected Leclerc to an "ostentatious parade of the spectacle of the dishonoured husband."[2] Details of the dishonour are (of course) not lacking, but, observes one of her biographers, "no very exact informa-

[1] *Procès-verbal d'ouverture et d'embaumement du corps du général en chef et capitaine général de Saint-Domingue*, in the *Gazette nationale ou le Moniteur universel*, Friday, Nivôse 17, year XI (Jan. 7, 1803), pp. 430, 431.

[2] *Mémoires de Barras*, II. 11.

tion is forthcoming regarding Mme. Leclerc's eccentricities at Hayti ; only a general statement that she threw herself heart and soul into the business of enjoying herself."[1] This assertion we can contrast with another, a more merciful one. "The love-affairs with which Pauline Bonaparte is credited at Hayti are very improbable," writes Comte Remacle ; "she found the climate very trying and, at this date, was in ill-health consequent on her first confinement, and also by reason of a troublesome sore which did not disappear until after her return to Paris, and then only through drastic remedies."[2] And it is, indeed, true that authentic information, emanating from the colony at the time, reveals Pauline as suffering. Yet this does not explain everything away. We shall see her in the same state from 1804 to 1815, dragging herself from watering-place to watering-place, a listless hypochondriac, slothfully morbid ; yet the fact of her having numerous lovers then is not open to question ; we

[1] Joseph Turquan, *Souveraines et grandes dames ; les sœurs de Napoléon*, p. 176.

[2] Comte Remacle, *Bonaparte et les Bourbons ; relations secrètes des agents de Louis XVIII à Paris pendant le Consulat*, p. 233.

have her letters, we have theirs. Well, then, what was possible in France under the Empire was just as possible in Hayti during this expedition, wasn't it? Doubtless it is improper for anyone to make definite statements in a case when all the evidence is equally open to suspicion, but, on the other hand, what we do know of Pauline's erotic career does not allow us to dismiss as incredible the whole crowd of tales which were going the round of the foreign newspapers and royalist pamphlets concerning the colonial behaviour of the First Consul's sister. The earliest of these reports, so far as we can trace them, occurs under the date of January 28, 1803, in the records of Louis XVIII's secret police. There is nothing vague about their accusations and the names are spelt in full :—

"While her husband was alive" [at Hayti], "she had given him General de Belle as A.D.C. On the death of the latter during the epidemic at Hayti she replaced him by Boyer, chief of the general staff, concerning whom the newspapers have some pretty things to say. Who is going to fill the places of Boyer and Leclerc? Nobody knows."[1]

[1] *Ibid.*

General de Belle was brother-in-law to Hoche, who was Joséphine's lover in the " des Carmes " prison during the Terror. This is the only occasion on which his name is mentioned, and there is no possibility of verifying how much truth the tale contains. Fouché, whose information as regards this period of Pauline's life harmonizes so curiously with the reports of Louis XVIII's agents, mentions no names here, writing no more than this : " Victimized by the fiery intensity of the tropical climate, she abandoned herself to every variety of sensual enjoyment."[1] It would appear that what the Duc d'Otrante here insinuates is nothing more nor less than that Pauline showed herself too complaisant towards the natives of the place. Nor need the accusation cause us any excessive degree of amazement when we reflect that away back in the previous century Frenchwomen had been made the object of a similar charge.

A news-sheet of September 11, 1763, refers to a royal proclamation which commands the re-embarkation of negroes domiciled in France, as the favour they had found among the ladies there had become a serious menace to the

[1] *Mémoires de Joseph Fouché, duc d'Otrante,* II. 44.

purity of the French stock. "At the Foundling Hospital," the paper goes on to remark, "nearly 1500 mulattoes have been counted."[1] At Hayti, likewise, the wives of the French officers were strangely fascinated by these savage chieftains, who wore silver spurs on their naked heels.[2] Such a scandal was created that a special ordinance was issued by Leclerc to the effect that all white women who had conducted themselves too freely with the natives were to be sent home to France, whatever their rank might be. Would strict justice have required that this severe decision should take effect on the General's own wife, Pauline? Naturally there comes a chorus of "Yes, yes, yes!" from the pamphleteers without exception; and Barras himself enlists himself in this nasty-minded regiment. According to him, Pauline had adventures "not only in Europe and at Hayti with all the white men in the army, but also with the negroes."[3] Barras

[1] Vicomte de Grouchy, *Documents sur le XVIII siècle; nouvelles à la main de la fin du règne de Louis XV;* printed from the MS. belonging to M. Anisson du Perron; Paris, 1898, p. 29.

[2] A. P. de Forges, *Le Général Leclerc*, p. 23.

[3] *Mémoires de Barras*, IV. 191.

evidently does not worry himself much about numbers! It is noteworthy, however, that a similar charge has been brought by him against Joséphine, in reference to the days of her youth at Martinique. In the opinion of this "French knight" (as he terms himself) every woman who went to the colonies was, *à priori*, likely to be too free with the local natives.

The Englishman Goldsmith does not go so far, contenting himself with the assertion that Pauline reserved "a strong dose of love for Pétion and Christophe."[1] The Pétion here mentioned was a mulatto named Alexandre Sabès, thirty-two years old at the time of the expedition, who died, president of Hayti, in 1818. M. Christophe, his rival, was a negro, born on the "plantation" of Limonade. He took an active part in the disturbances in the island, which brought him to the throne. His consecration, with cocoa-nut oil, took place in 1810, in the church of the Cape, whereby he became Henry I, King of San Domingo, at the hands of a Capuchin, who yielded to the entreaties of the black archbishop. This glorious monarch

[1] Lewis Goldsmith, *Histoire secrète du cabinet de Napoléon Buonaparte*, p. 128.

immediately created a nobility in his own image ; princes, dukes, marshals. At his receptions the usher announced the Count Lemonade, Baron Jeremiah, the Duke of Marmalade, the Prince of " Salle-Trone," and other important personages of the same calibre. His Majesty Henry I was represented in London by one with whose name we are familiar, " M. Peltier, a Frenchman, a contributor to the journal called the *Ambigu,* having published several articles which were favourable to this prince, was rewarded by, among other tokens of gratitude, a good-sized cargo of colonial produce ; this writer is generally considered as his representative in London."[1] Colonial produce from Hayti allowed Peltier to utter some supplementary truths directed against Bonaparte and his court.

To conclude, the only lover with whom Pauline is not credited, will never be credited again, was Fréron.

He was there, too, at Hayti, but sadly lacking in the celebrity he formerly enjoyed. Directly after his return from Marseilles, in the year IV,

[1] *Galerie historique des contemporains, ou nouvelle biographie ;* Mons, 1827, III. 391.

he once again tasted the poverty and the miseries of his early days. He missed re-election to the Five Hundred, and dragged out a pitiable existence, boycotted on all sides, cut by his former friends, condemned to the disgrace and the bitterness of complete neglect. Everything gave way underneath him, while, in the distance, in an interval between two dashing victories, "la diva Paolina" married someone else, someone whom Fréron had once met before Toulon—when Leclerc was A.D.C. to his brother-in-law, General La Poype. Thereupon he turned to the mistress of bygone, happier days. She awaited him, faithful to her fickle lover, still the servant of his desires. Her he married in some hole-and-corner fashion; no one knew anything of it. And he was holding out his hand now, asking help from Joseph, begging alms of Lucien. But what was become of the loot from Toulon? Where were the results of brigandage at Marseilles? Floundering about in his Slough of Despond he was clutching at anything which promised subsistence.

When Lucien came to be Minister of the Interior, he nominated Fréron managing director of the Paris hospitals. In the year X, at the date of

the Hayti expedition, someone bethought himself of Fréron, and he was appointed sub-prefect at Les Cayes at 18,000 francs a year. He was in luck again; and he made haste to embark. Frimaire 5, year X, he reached Brest, summoned thither by the head of the colonial administration department, to take his place on board the admiral's ship *Océan*. What feeling kept him on the quay when the anchor was being weighed? He let the ship go without him.[1] Was he afraid of confronting, in his poverty-stricken, "seen-better-days" state, that effulgent mistress of his—his the day before yesterday? Was it her pity he feared? or her disdain? or her indifference? This further bitter experience he did not face. But, by way of consolation, had he not with him, next his ravaged heart, the dainty packet of highly-strung, ardent love-letters, posted at Marseilles in the year IV? Four months did he spend at Brest, months of bitter despair, impotent rage, and misery. In time, towards the end of Ventôse, he took his place on board the *Zélé*, which

[1] M. Joseph Turquan is in error when he writes (*Souveraines et grandes dames; les sœurs de Napoléon*, p. 175) that Fréron went by the same vessel as Pauline.

was kept at sea by bad weather from Germinal to the middle of Prairial—seventy-five days. What forlorn recollections must have been those of the exile during the long, vacant hours of that voyage! "Tiger, away to the forests of Tartary to couch with savage beasts!"—thus had Isnard apostrophized him in days gone by.[1] But it was not savage beasts, it was death, that he was going to meet. When he landed at Hayti he had barely a month more to live.

In Messidor he was attacked by the yellow fever. He was alone; his wife had not been able to obtain a passage on a Government ship.[2] Alone then, he dragged out his pitiable, short agony. On Messidor 26, at four in the afternoon, all was over. Leclerc, informed immediately, wrote to Admiral De Crès; "Fréron is dead. He dies poor. I recommend his wife and children to you. He was a good sort and a pleasant fellow, and he went out of his way to assist me when power was his, when he was the representa-

[1] Isnard to Fréron, in the appendix to the 1824 re-issue of the *Mémoire historique sur la réaction royale et les massacres du Midi*, pp. 364, 365.

[2] Autograph letter from Admiral De Crès to Lucien Bonaparte, 2 pp. 4to. *Catalogue d'autographes Noël Charavay*, No. 392, April, 1909, *pièce* No. 64,385, offered at 15 francs.

tive of the people with the Italy army."[1] Thus brief was the funeral oration over Pauline's first lover, and it reached France signed by her husband. It was in a corner of the cemetery of the Cape, amid the rustling mangroves, that the corpse of the plague-stricken man was thrown, denied the land of his birth for his eternal and unheeded rest. Three months and a half later, it was Leclerc's turn to leave the land of the living. But he, at any rate, came to France to sleep the sleep of the just. The second day after his death a mortuary chapel was installed in state on board the *Swiftsure*. "I trust that within two days, or, at latest, within three, you will leave behind you this wretched country which must henceforth be a land of sorrow and weariness for me," writes Admiral Touche-Tréville to Paulette on Brumaire 13.[2] The coffin was taken on board amid the roar of cannon, was hoisted on to the bridge, and there remained, crowned with the dead man's hat and sword.

[1] Quoted by Dr. Magnac, *L'expédition du Général Leclerc à Saint-Domingue ; la prise du Cap ;* in the *Carnet*, Jan., 1905, p. 96.

[2] Signed autograph letter, *à Mme. Leclerc ; à bord du Duguay-Trouin ;* 2 pp. 8vo. *Catalogue d'autographes Etienne Charavay*, Jan., 1894, offered for 20 francs.

Thus, in solitary state, did he wend his way back to his distant fatherland, guarded by the soldiers who had survived the disasters of the war, majestically cradled on the great billows of the foaming seas. On the ship had been arranged a sombre, warrior's *chapelle ardente*, adorned with trophies and standards; and therein, on a pedestal, stood the great leaden vase which contained the dead man's heart, enclosed in a golden urn, bearing the following votive inscription :—

> Paulette Bonaparte, married to General Leclerc, Prairial 20, year V, has enclosed in this urn her love together with the heart of her husband, whose perils and whose glory she had shared. Her son will not receive this mournful and treasured legacy from his father without receiving that of his virtues.[1]

A sad return home, but twice a triumph! For was not this *Swiftsure* that same English vessel of the line captured by Admiral Ganteaume in a fight (Messidor 6, year IX) between

[1] Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon et sa famille* (1802–1805); Paris, 1898, II. p. 229.

Tripoli and Crete, and kept to serve, under the name given it by the enemy, in the French fleet, as a lively and ever-present symbol of victory ?[1] She arrived at Toulon, Pluviôse 7, amid salutes from the guns of the foreign vessels, and transferred the coffin to the *Cornélie*.[2] The news of Leclerc's death had already reached France, on Nivôse 25. Less than one month later the general's remains arrived at Paris,[3] whence, after the last honours had been paid, they were brought to Villers-Cotterets, and laid from Ventôse 5–17 in the church of the little town. The tomb erected by Fontaine in the park of the château of Montgobert, which be-

[1] A. P. de Forges, *Le Général Leclerc*, p. 32. The *Swiftsure* ended by taking part in the battle of Trafalgar, and, after being dismasted during the battle, was taken to Gibraltar by the English. She was then a vessel of seventy-four guns. Cf. *Routes et voyages de Jacques-Louis Chieux, sergent-major au 16e de ligne* (1799–1814), edited by Commander Lévi in the *Mémoires de la Société Dunkerquoise*, 1907, pp. 56, 60.

[2] Signed autograph letter from Admiral Ganteaume to General Cervoni ; Toulon, Pluviôse 7, year XI ; pp. 1½ folio. *Catalogue d'une précieuse collection de lettres autographes concernant Napoléon Ier, sa famille, ses maréchaux, ses généraux et ses ministres ;* Paris, May, 1894, No. 181. A printer's error dates this letter, in the catalogue, " Pluviôse 7, year II."

[3] " January 14, 1803. The news has just come of General Leclerc's death from disease at Hayti." (Comte Remacle, *Bonaparte et les Bourbons ; relations secrètes des agents de Louis XVIII à Paris sous le Consulat*, p. 225.)

longed to Leclerc, was soon ready. Ventôse 18 the shell of lead was placed beneath the marble monument ; the slab over the vault was sealed ; all was over.

Pauline's first lover and her first husband, the two witnesses of the happy hours of her youthful love-affairs, have both disappeared. Her heart was about to summon her to destinies both novel and lively.[1]

[1] General Leclerc's tomb still exists in the park of the château of Montgobert, whose present owner is the Duchess of Albuféra. On January 16, 1868, the municipality of Pontoise voted the erection of a statue to Leclerc at the highest point of what was then the rue Impériale, level with the church of Saint-Maclou. An imperial decree of March 18 the same year approved of this proposal. At this date Leclerc's last surviving sister, who had married Marshal Davout, was still alive ; she it was who had made the offer of the statue of the general to the town of Pontoise. Lemot was the sculptor. For a long time the statue stood in the Panthéon, but when what once had been the church of Sainte-Geneviève was given back into Catholic hands, Louis XVIII ordered the statue to be sent to Marshal Davout, who found a place for it in the park of his château of Savigny-sur-Orge. Apart from its artistic value, which is far from being so insignificant as M. Frédéric Masson would have us believe, Leclerc's statue at Pontoise thus presents, as we see it now, a double interest as a curiosity.

CHAPTER III

THE MERRY WIDOW

THE Consular court went into mourning[1] for ten days[2] from the date of the announcement of Leclerc's death.

Pluviôse 22 Pauline reached Paris, to take up her quarters at the Hôtel Marbœuf, Joseph's home ; the hôtel which was subsequently handed over to Marshal Suchet. There she rested to tide over the early phases of her sorrow. Besides, she was ill, tired, worn out by the long sea-passage, overcome by all the ritual of the general's funeral ceremonies. Her rest lasted barely a month. Once back in Paris she was infected by the intoxicating influence of the capital, by the whirl of its luxury and its fêtes. Moreover, being domiciled under Joseph's roof

[1] For some royalist witticisms concerning this mourning, cf. Comte Remacle, *Bonaparte et les Bourbons ; relations secrètes des agents de Louis XVIII à Paris sous le Consulat*, pp. 233, 237, 238.

[2] A. Laquiante, *Un hiver à Paris sous le Consulat*, p. 259.

—and supervision—probably bored her; she was more or less under restraint there, and she made haste to escape. We find her, therefore, a few weeks after her return, looking round for a mansion to her taste, something magnificent and striking; a shrine for her beauty and a reward for her patience. Her choice fell on the one-time Hôtel du Charost, then for sale in the rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honoré.[1] The negotiations did not take long. In Germinal, year XI, Pauline moved into her new house, the initial cost of which was 400,000 francs. Nobody saw anything surprising in her purchase of this magnificent residence, noble in the lines of its architecture from the spacious *cour d'honneur* to the height of its façade. The general opinion was that Pauline had returned from Hayti with colossal wealth. Lewis Goldsmith, in 1814, reckoned her share of the booty at seven millions.[2] He might as well have doubled

[1] The site of this mansion (No. 39, rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honoré) is at present occupied by the English embassy. The purchase was effected in 1815. Castlereagh resided there during the Restoration. Achille Biovès, *La Comtesse Brownlow à Paris* (1813–1815), in *Feuilles d'histoire du XVII^e au XX^e siècle*, May, 1910, p. 463.

[2] Lewis Goldsmith, *Histoire secrète du cabinet de Napoléon Buonaparte*, p. 128. A pamphlet against Savary, Napoleon's

it ; who would have contradicted him ? Reichardt, too, asserts that on becoming a widow, Pauline became " the richest of the family,"[1] next to Lucien. Lastly comes Doris of Bourges[2] to give a finishing touch to these charges by means of a characteristic anecdote. With the

Minister of Police, goes still farther, estimating Pauline's share at 16 or 20 millions of francs, not more. Cf. *Examen de conscience du dernier ministre de la police générale sous le règne de Buonaparte, publié en* 1814 ; Paris, 1814, p. 49.

[1] A. Laquiante, *Un hiver à Paris sous le Consulat*, p. 454.

[2] Besides his various disgusting pamphlets about the Emperor, Doris of Bourges issued *Amours secrètes des quatre frères de Napoléon ;* Paris, 1816, 2 vols.; and *Amours et aventures du Vicomte de Barras avec Mmes. de Beauharnais, Tallien, la douairière du Baillet, Mlle. Sophie Arnoult ;* Paris, 1816, 2 vols.; and, *L'Ecolier de Brienne, ou le chambellan indiscret ; mémoires historiques et inédits ;* Paris, 1817, 3 vols. Quérard writes : " Considerable mystery has long enveloped the name of the writer whose zeal against Napoleon and his relations was so bitter and so persistent, though rather in the way of speculation counting on the passions so deeply roused from 1814 to 1818, than as a matter of conscience. M. Colnet, in a review in a number of the *Journal de Paris* in 1814, of the *Précis Historique*, which had just appeared, attributed it to M. de Bourrienne ; it is to this erroneous attribution that the pamphlets owed all the success that they obtained. Furthermore, when their author issued his writing against the imperial family under the pseudonym of the Baron de B—— he was making the most of pseudonymity at the same time as he was making game of the public's credulity. Some people were aware that M. Ch. Doris was at the time as far as possible from being a baron." (J. M. Quérard, *Les supercheries littéraires dévoilées ;* Paris, 1869, I. part i.; and *La France littéraire*, II. p. 581.)

utmost confidence in his readers' idiotic credulity he writes :—

"General Leclerc's widow, Pauline Bonaparte, returned from Hayti dragging along behind her, Artemisia-fashion, her husband's body, most carefully boxed up and never out of her sight. Some boobies got quite enthusiastic over this touching example of conjugal fidelity ; but what would they have said had they known that the general's mortal remains had been consigned to the sewers, and that this coffin, so carefully tended, was filled instead with the diamonds and a portion of the treasure that he and his noble wife had stolen during the expedition."[1]

It is this same Doris of Bourges who, apropos of Pauline's mansion, dilates on the scandalous methods she resorted to to enlarge it, to stimulate the wrath of his public of simpletons. If

[1] *Bonaparte, sa famille et sa cour, anecdotes secrètes sur quelques personnages qui ont marqué au commencement du XVIII^e siècle, par un chambellan forcé à l'être ;* Paris, 1816, II. 283. "An extremely rare work, of which there is no copy at the Bibliothéque nationale." Marcellin Pellet, *Napoléon à l'ile d'Elbe ;* Paris, 1888, p. 38.

we are to believe him, she had a neighbour whose house she coveted for an annexe to her palace. This neighbour was no willing listener to any of her proposals, and, to avoid listening to them, adopted the course of removing to the country for a month. On his return, what was his astonishment to find all his furniture on the staircase; and, in the house, all the first-floor doors walled-up and, somewhere or other, a slip of paper authorizing Bonaparte's sister's notary to pay over a stated sum as compensation for this summary expropriation.[1] And that is how, under the Restoration, the history of the Napoleonidae was written.

It is curious to note how this same Doris never mentions, in connexion with this topic, Pauline's gay adventures, nor utters a single name. Was he the only one who remained ignorant of what was then the favourite subject of conversation in certain Parisian drawing-rooms?

The fact remains that from 1802 onwards we find Louis XVIII's agents speaking of Pauline's lovers—in the plural, and finding room for the

[1] *Bonaparte, sa famille et sa cour*, pp. 291–293.

echoes of these pranks in the reports that their master was to read.[1] Sémonville took credit (much to his advantage under the Restoration) for a share in these pranks. The Marquis Charles Louis Huguet de Sémonville was then high in favour at court, having been a stout adherent of the *coup d'État* of Brumaire 18. "Short, fat, and jolly"[2]—these were all the charms that he could offer Pauline, with the flower of his forty-three years. There appears to be little doubt as to her having taken pleasure in the homage he paid her. "M. de Sémonville," it has been stated decisively, "had been one of her thousand lovers; he remained on very good terms with her."[3] Well, why should he be otherwise as regards the sister of the man who conferred on him the senatorship of Bourges and the embassy to Holland? "Sémonville," said Beugnot of him, "is not the kind of man to let himself be forgotten by anyone who can be of use

[1] Cf. Comte Remacle, *Bonaparte et les Bourbons; relations secrètes des agents de Louis XVIII à Paris, sous le Consulat*, p. 69.

[2] Georgette Ducrest, *Mémoires sur l'impératrice Joséphine, la ville, la cour et les salons de Paris sous l'Empire*; Paris, n.d., p. 82.

[3] Comte d'Hérisson, *Le cabinet noir*, p. 129.

to him."[1] It was a sentiment—the only one, perhaps, to which he remained faithful. Wasn't it Talleyrand who answered someone who spoke to him of Sémonville being ill, with the remark, "What, Sémonville caught the fever? What use is that to him?"[2] For the rest, he was "an excellent husband."[3] He married Montholon's wife, whose two daughters became, respectively, the wives of Marshal MacDonald and of the Comte de Sparre.

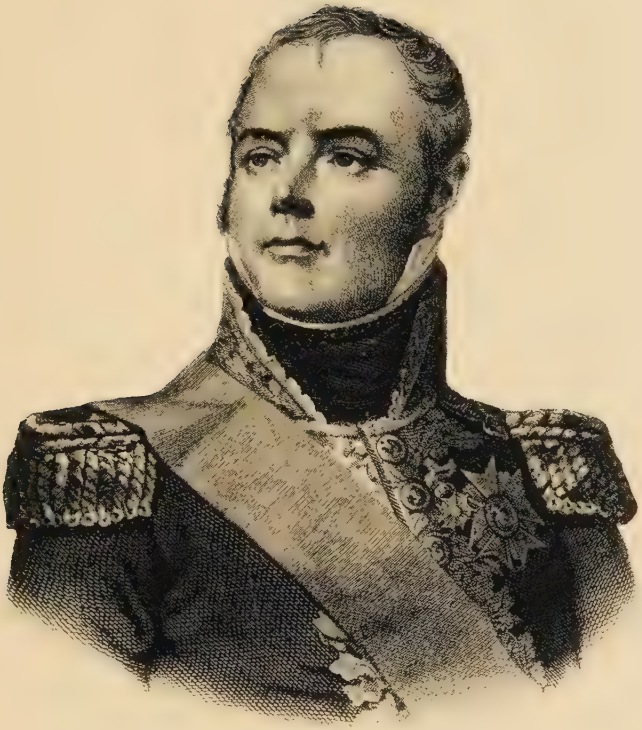
Besides these various characteristics of his, Sémonville had another—garrulousness. To every comer he narrated his adventure, including therein the names of his rivals. To Baron Mounier he asserted that Pauline divided her attentions between five lovers previous to her departure for Hayti. "He did not name them," said Mounier, "but I suppose that he, MacDonald, and Montholon made three of them."[4] Montholon, the Montholon of

[1] *Mémoires du Comte Beugnot, ancien ministre* (1783–1815), edited by Comte Albert Beugnot, his grandson; Paris, 1889, p. 293.

[2] *Mémoires du Comte Beugnot*, p. 294.

[3] Georgette Ducrest, *Mémoires sur l'Impératrice Joséphine*, p. 82.

[4] Comte d'Hérisson, *Le cabinet noir*, p. 129.



MARSHAL MACDONALD

St. Helena, was Sémonville's son-in-law.[1] His name is discreetly passed over in silence by his father-in-law, who was more liberal with detail concerning MacDonald. "He told us" —it is still Mounier who is writing—"that Pauline was very much smitten with him; and that at Saint-Leu they shut themselves up together for three days with provisions *ad hoc* and without opening the door to a living soul."[2] And, as a matter of fact, we do find some rather obscure lines in the Memoirs of the Duchesse d'Abrantès,[3] which refer to MacDonald, Moreau, and Beurnonville, as the protagonists in some mysterious intriguing by Pauline; but the meaning of her words is decidedly vague, almost wholly incomprehensible. We can, however, assume that at the back of Sémonville's garrulous boasting some grains of truth exist, and that MacDonald was one of the numerous angels in Pauline's paradise. Should

[1] It is a curious thing that Charles de Montholon, whom Sémonville adopted, was legally entitled to bear the name Montholon-Sémonville. See Philip Gounard, *Lettres du Comte et de la Comtesse de Montholon* (1819–1821), with introduction and notes; Paris, 1906, p. 5.

[2] Comte d'Hérisson, *Le cabinet noir*, pp. 129, 130.

[3] *Mémoires de Madame la duchesse d'Abrantès*, II. 112, 113.

we likewise include among their number General Jean Joseph Amable Humbert, Ponsard's "*Lion amoureux*"?

At the date of the Hayti expedition, Humbert was barely thirty-five years of age, having been born on August 26, 1767, in the Vosges, at Saint-Nabord-sur-Moselle. He was a handsome libertine, rubicund and powerful; so much of a ladies' man as to have lost two posts for what he did on that account. It was for libertinage that he was dismissed from the merchant's office at Nancy, where he was earning a modest living; for the same reason was he asked to leave the hat factory at Lyons, where he also worked.[1] Thereupon he enlists in the Lyons National Guard and, as soon as he had won his sergeant's stripes, resigns and comes back to live near Remiremont, making the round of the countryside, bartering, trafficking, employing his loquacity to facilitate dealings in rabbit-skins, which were his speciality. But the taste for soldiering seized him again. It was what he was meant for, to clank his sabre on the field of battle and in public-house, to strike terror into

[1] Guillaumin, *Les derniers républicains; Pichegru, Simon, Delmas, Monnier, "Le Lion amoureux"*; Paris, 1905, p. 262.

the hearts of battalions and mothers. August 2, 1792, then, he becomes captain in the 13th regiment of the Vosges volunteers at Epinal, and, thirteen days later, lieutenant-colonel. The following September he is in the army corps, under Custine, which invaded the Palatinate and hoisted the flag of Liberty at Speyer, Mainz, and Frankfort. In October, 1793, he jumps to the other extremity of France—to Vendée, gaining the rank of general in the Brest coast army. And all the time he serves two deities together—Love and War, Battle and Woman.

At Rennes, accordingly, while the Vendée leaders are protracting the delusive conferences, he is to be found at the theatre, the red-haired giant with the broad shoulders (and proud of them), with his arms round the waists of Mlles. Ninette and Cassin, actresses at the local theatre. Summoned to join the Sambre-et-Meuse army, he forsakes love adventures for police work. The Directory makes him come to Paris for Fructidor 18, despite the law prohibiting armies not summoned by the governmental assemblies approaching within twelve leagues of Paris. Humbert gets out of the difficulty by means of a practical joke. He has

the posts which indicate the constitutional radius torn up, and throws them into a cart which he sends on at the head of the army ; "a strange way of not overstepping the limit, inasmuch as the latter goes on in front."[1] After Fructidor 18, Humbert obtains a short holiday. Then he sets out with the *Légion des Francs* and directs that descent on Ireland which has made him immortal, thanks to his cool audacity and patriotic gallantry. After seeing service in the Danube army, and also that of the coasts of Holland, he received a summons to take part in the expedition to Hayti. Such was the man who is said to have been Pauline's lover during the voyage, not only on the way back, but also on the way there.[2] The actuality of these relations between them seems to be equally open to question in both cases. A ship is a small house on such occasions, little secrecy being practicable when the passengers on board are mixing freely with one another. That the possibility of Pauline having relations with Humbert on the outward voyage is clear, is undeniable ; but that is a different thing from affirm-

[1] Guillaumin, *Les derniers républicains*, p. 297.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 314.

ing that they happened. It would be necessary first to postulate Leclerc being an imbecile or complaisant. We can acquit him both of the ridicule implied by the first hypothesis, and of the insult implied by the second.

As to what may have taken place at Hayti itself is not a case where we can speak so decidedly. A widespread belief did exist in a liaison between Paulette and the ex-rabbit-skin-merchant. "Humbert," wrote a Restoration biographer, "was a poor courtier and never obtained any favours from the emperor Napoleon, but it is stated that he succeeded much better at Hayti with regard to that sovereign's sister."[1] This statement has led to a deduction being made that Leclerc cashiered Humbert as an "act of revenge" under pretext of malversations by him.[2] The obscurity in which certain episodes of the reconquest of the colony are enveloped do not admit of a definite decision on this point. But, guilty or not guilty, Hum-

[1] *Galerie historique des contemporains, ou nouvelle biographie ;* Mons, 1827, V. 348.

[2] Guillaumin, *Les derniers républicains*, p. 314. Concerning the dismissal of Humbert, cf. Dr. Magnac, *L'Expédition du Général Leclerc à Saint-Domingue ; la prise du Cap ;* in the *Carnet*, January, 1905, pp. 96, 99.

bert re-embarked for France. It has been said, and printed, and repeated, that this return of his took place on the *Swiftsure* when that vessel was bringing back Pauline and her husband's remains. But in reality it was not so at all. Humbert was already back in France by the time that Pauline was completing her quarantine at the Nozarettes at Toulon.[1] This authentic evidence strikes hard at the root of the legend, but what completes its overthrow is the discovery of the name of the *Swiftsure's* captain, which was Huber. From this information M. Frédéric Masson has drawn a strictly logical inference, and has thus been enabled to demand, with entire confidence in his conclusions, "Is it not from the fact of these names being almost identical that the pamphleteers have woven their anecdote?"[2] There is no question that this is the right view.

The case of Humbert may therefore be summarized thus—moral impossibility of relations with Pauline on the outward voyage; physical impossibility on the homeward voyage; possibility during their stay there. But since on

[1] Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon et sa famille*, II. 230.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 231.

this last point we have no information whatever, all that we read about it is merely inspired by the more or less fertile imagination of the anecdote-mongers.[1] We are far from having undertaken to re-edit their effusions.

On her return from Hayti did Pauline find Sémonville, MacDonald, and Montholon still in Paris? Did she resume her former relations with them? Information on these points is somewhat scanty. If we are to believe Sémonville's confidences, the answer is—Yes. It is possible. "La diva Paolina" never turned a wholly deaf ear to a tender "Don't say goodbye." In any case, she welcomed back one admirer and one lover. The admirer was by no means unworthy of her: this was Denis

[1] Twenty days after his arrival in France Humbert was deprived of his rank. He retired to Crevy, near Ploërmel, without pay, where he turned farmer and horse-dealer. On Nov. 17, 1806, the Emperor granted him a pension, and, Aug. 8, 1809, gave him employment again as brigadier-general in the Flanders army. Sept. 26 following, Humbert was transferred to the Northern army, with which he only remained a few months, for he was discharged on March 7, 1810, with 3000 francs pension. Fully convinced that a return to the army was henceforth out of the question for him, he adopted the course of passing over to America (1812) to offer his assistance in the revolt against the Spaniards. He took part in almost all the battles of the war, and ended his varied career on Jan. 3, 1823, at New Orleans.

De Crès, the admiral, Minister of Marine. She certainly encouraged him, for she almost sent him off his head. "He very nearly got thin in consequence," remarks M. Masson incidentally.[1]

It was not Pauline, however, who profited by the admiral's improved figure, but Rosine de Saint-Joseph,[2] whom he married at Paris, November 15, 1813.[3] If Pauline ever had any

[1] Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon et sa famille*, II. 241.

[2] Rosine de Saint-Joseph, born at Marseilles, May 1, 1788, took for her first husband (at Paris, June 26, 1805) General Charles de Saligny, comte de San Germano, who died at Madrid, Feb. 25, 1809.

[3] Here is the letter, in our possession and unpublished, in which the new Duchesse De Crès informed her uncle, Nicolas Clary, the husband of Malcy Anne Jeanne Rouyer, of her marriage :—

"Paris, *Nov.* 20, 1813.

"I like to assure myself, my dear uncle, that both Malcy and yourself will be pleased to hear of my marriage. I have greatly regretted your not being here when it happened ; I should have asked you to act as witness. I had not the courage to write to you for fear of putting you to inconvenience. I should very much have liked to have had you here to-day to dine with my relations, and I feel disappointed at not having had that pleasure. I hope that I shall soon see you and Malcy (whom I embrace) again.

"I have seen grandmamma to-day ; she is just the same as usual. M. De Crès is anxious to make your acquaintance. Both of them and Moïna [her daughter by her first marriage] send you their love.

"Duchesse De Crès."

regrets at having used her heedless, fascinating ways to make game of De Crès, she might have consoled herself with the thought that she had escaped a second, and speedy, widowhood. In 1813 the admiral had only seven years to live.[1]

As for the lover, if he had the best of it, so far as personal appearances went, he was not quite such a success. He was Mr. Pierre Rapenouille, known as Lafon, actor at the Comédie Française, who played romantic "heroes" and ended by aspiring to transfer to real life the adventures in which he took part on the stage in the evenings.

He "shone to as great advantage on the stage as in society," says a Consulate pamphlet of

[1] "Nov. 2, 1820, an occurrence which has remained a mystery came to hasten his end; M. De Crès was burnt in his bed through the explosion of several packets of gunpowder which had been placed underneath the mattress. At the same moment his valet threw himself from a window 40 feet high. The suspicion fell wholly on this wretched man, who died the next day without being induced to say anything more than that persons unknown to him had seized him and thrown him out of that window. Missing money and promissory notes have left no doubt as to the contriver of this murder. M. De Crès died of his injuries on the 7th of the following December." (*Biographie de tous les ministres depuis la constitution de* 1791 *jusqu'à nos jours;* Paris, 1825, p. 221.)

him,[1] although the same author denies him even physical charm. While admitting he was tall, he reproaches him with having doctored his slender figure; and as for his head, says that it was totally lacking in nobility of character.[2] But the ladies thought exactly the reverse. "He may be termed a pretty man," said Mlle. George, who was, it is true, very fond of him; "his features were very delicate, nose slightly tip-tilted, small black eyes but very keen and brilliant; immaculately elegant, an excellent voice, excellent, too, at making love,[3] at tears, at enthusiasm; his fervency most contagious, his by-play most striking, but no depth

[1] Clément Courtois, *L'opinion du parterre, ou censure des acteurs, auteurs, et spectateurs du Théâtre Français;* Paris, Germinal, year XI, p. 80.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 81.

[3] And also at making meals. A letter from him is extant, dated Feb. 5, 1807, to Grimod de la Reynière, the famous epicure, and author of the *Almanach des Gourmands*, wherein, after asking for information anent certain stage-parts, he continues, "You do not forget, Monsieur (I dare hope you do not, at least), that I have the greatest faith in your traditions, in your good taste, and in the enlightenment emanating from your understanding and from your long experience." But, he adds, spiritual nourishment is not all that he expects of him, and he has high hopes that Grimod de la Reynière will answer his letter with provisions of excellent quality. Cf. *Catalogue d'une précieuse collection de lettres autographes;* Paris, Feb., 1907, No. 87.

and little ' composition ' ; like fireworks which dazzle and compel the most enthusiastic applause."[1] The fireworks had dazzled Mlle. George herself. Did not Lafon propose to her, swearing faithfulness by Ariadne's rock? At the mention of Ariadne, Mlle. George timidly reminded him of Theseus' desertion, whereto Lafon peremptorily retorted, " My dear little girl, you can't compare the two. Theseus was a libertine and Lafon highly respectable."[2] His respectability, however, took the form, later, of unblushingly cuckolding Camillo, prince Borghèse. But then, he " was very attractive to women," and " his gifts were of a kind whose business it is to be seductive." Moreover, " love he expressed to perfection."[3] In this blissful and unexacting profession Mr. Rapenouille-Lafon had made his début at school. At seventeen years of age he had written a " Death of Hercules," in five acts, in consequence of which his parents had promptly sent

[1] *Mémoires inédits de Mlle. George publiés d'après le manuscrit original ;* Paris, 1908, p. 16. It is known that this publication, a masterpiece of naïve pretentiousness, is the work of a retired solicitor, Me. Paul Arthur Cheramy.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 23.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

him to study the elements of the Pharmacopœia at Montpellier University. In 1800 he definitely forsook the art of the scalpel to put on the tragic buskin, being then twenty-seven,[1] with a marked southern-provincial accent.[2] That was why one of his comrades at the Comédie familiarly knew him as " l'Orosmane du Midi."[3]

Where did Pauline make his acquaintance? Probably at Lucien's house; Lucien patronized Lafon. At Plessis-Chamant this paragon of romantic " heroes " stage-managed the tragedies and comedies in which Lucien, Elisa, and sometimes Pauline acted with the retinues of the First Consul's relations. The realism of some of these performances annoyed Bonaparte. Says a contemporary: " The ardour of the declarations, the energy and expressiveness of the gestures, the too nude accuracy of the costumes, made a bad impression on the

[1] He was born at Lalinde, in Périgord, Sept. 1, 1773. His début at the Comédie Française took place May 8, 1800, and he was admitted to membership in the September following. Cf. Georges Monval, archivist of the Théâtre Français, *Liste alphabétique des sociétaires depuis Molière jusqu'à nos jours*, p. 71.

[2] *Biographie des hommes vivants;* Paris, July, 1818, IV. p. 43.

[3] *Mémoires inédits de Mlle. George*, p. 24.

audience. Lucien was rebuked by the First Consul."[1] It was, perhaps, in the course of one of these mild tragedy-courses that Pauline acquired the taste for tragedy and tragedians which made her leave the arms of Lafon only to fall into those of Palma. What seems to be a moral certainty is that she was the redoubtable Rapenouille's mistress before setting out for Hayti. That is the inference to be gathered from an anecdote which is to be found in several Memoirs by contemporaries, and is certainly far less apocryphal than it has sometimes been represented as being: "When Mlle. Duchesnois[2] heard that General Leclerc was taking his wife with him she thoughtlessly blurted out before a lot of people, 'Oh, my God, I *am* sorry, it's enough to kill Lafon; the poor boy does *so* dote on her!'" It was no use making signs to her to

[1] W. F. Van Scheelten, *Mémoires sur la Reine Hortense, aujourd'hui Duchesse de Saint-Leu;* Paris, 1833, I. 211.

[2] Catherine Joséphine Rafuin, known as Duchesnois, born at Saint-Saulves, near Valenciennes, June 5, 1777, made her first appearance at the Comédie-Française, August 3, 1802, was admitted to membership March 17, 1804, was pensioned off Nov. 1, 1829, and died at Paris, January 8, 1835. Georges Monval, *Liste alphabétique des sociétaires*, p. 42. The sentence probably comes from one of Lafon's other fellow-members. In any case, it is hardly one to throw doubt on.

stop her unfortunate expressions of sympathy; she went on for several minutes lamenting the sad fate of her "unlucky comrade."[1] Lafon subsequently got even with her by declaring that he really couldn't act with that "monster."[2] He was only half right.

Pauline's relations with the tragedian were not so much of a secret as to pass unobserved. In 1814 a pamphlet said: "The celebrated Lafond [*sic*] is the 'favoured lover,'"[3] an assertion which was far from having the merit of being unpublished or new.

The lovers' meetings took place not, probably, at Lafon's house,[4] but rather at Pauline's.

Was it not these meetings that the author of Fouché's Memoirs had in mind when he exclaimed, in lyrical wise: "Voluptuous château de Neuilly! magnificent mansion of the Faubourg-St.-Honoré! If your walls revealed the truth, as did those of the kings of Babylon,

[1] Georgette Ducrest, *Mémoires sur l'Impératrice Joséphine*, p. 74.

[2] Clément Courtois, *L'opinion du parterre*, p. 164.

[3] Lewis Goldsmith, *Histoire secrète du cabinet de Napoléon Buonaparte*, p. 128.

[4] In 1807 Lafon lived at No. 26 rue des Petits-Champs; *Annuaire dramatique, troisième année;* Paris, 1807, p. 78.

what licentious scenes would you not delineate in unmistakable characters ! "[1] But the walls, at any rate, had the merit of discretion. And it is true that Lafon cannot be accused of babbling in this respect. If he took anyone into his confidence he did so with exceptional reticence. Nobody's reminiscences contain echoes of the affair ; no letters have come to light to give a clue. His silence was, then, exemplary and he never dreamt, as did Blangini, one of his successors, for example, of making money out of his recollections of his amours. This cautiousness renders it quite impossible to settle the date when the lovers broke off their relations. Probably the end came in the early days of the Empire, since we do not find Lafon attending on the princess or crossing her path between 1805 and 1815. But he was punished for his sin ; one day there fell on him the fate which he inflicted on Borghèse. " Domestic troubles in conjunction with some special incidents have decided M. Lafon to apply for his pension," writes a Restoration biographer.[2] He did not,

[1] *Mémoires de Joseph Fouché, duc d'Otrante,* II. 45.

[2] *Biographe nouvelle des contemporains ;* Paris, 1823, X. 287.

however, take his pension till seven years after this announcement—on April 1, 1830, to be exact. Retiring to Bordeaux, "l'Orosmane du Midi" died there May 10, 1846.[1] The name of a town, a date, that is all we know of the closing years of that lover of divine Pauline in those halcyon days of the Consulate.

[1] Georges Monval, *Liste alphabétique des sociétaires*, p. 71.

CHAPTER IV

PATHOLOGY OF A "LIGHT-O'-LOVE"

BEFORE dealing with the latter half of Pauline's sentimental-erotic career, it will not be out of place to bring together a few specimens of the evidence which defines her influence and her attractiveness, if only to explain how easy it was for her to make conquests. The unanimity of the praise which her contemporaries accord her beauty reveals the extent of her seductive charm, the royal ascendency which "this wayward, florentine, creature, half jewel, half siren,"[1] established over those nearest her, and even over those whom etiquette compelled to keep their distance. Napoleon himself did not escape this ascendency of hers. "He has admitted," notes Las Cases, "that she was beyond dispute, the prettiest

[1] Henri Bouchot, *La Toilette à la cour de Napoléon ; chiffons et politique de grandes dames* (1810–1815), *d'après des documents inédits ;* Paris, n.d., p. 47.

woman in Paris."[1] Here lies the explanation of the Emperor's indulgence at times, of his incomprehensible pardonings, and of his tolerance; strange in one who prescribed respectability, and watched, or appointed others to watch, as if under martial law, to see that it was observed. Sometimes indeed he was forced to remind Pauline of the respect which she owed to the name, and to the fame, in which she had a share; but it seems to have cost him an effort to do so. He was almost afraid, it would seem, of being thought to tyrannize over so charming a woman who was said to be an invalid, and, in fact, was one, though solely in the intervals between an adventure and an assignation. The Emperor gave way, tacitly consented, shut his eyes. That is why, for one or two lovers sent away under surveillance to the provinces, ten others were left alone to please themselves—and the princess. At St. Helena, the exile affected scepticism as regards these dissolute ways of hers; he was endeavouring to divert spiteful gossip from the facts of the case. Later on we shall have occasion to show that, as a matter of fact, nothing, or at any rate

[1] Las Cases, *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, II. 31.

very little, escaped him. That Pauline's charm achieved this victory over Napoleon makes it perfectly easy to understand her less startling successes. Everyone around her joined in a chorus of sustained, fervent, enthusiastic admiration; women especially, far as they are, as everyone knows, from erring on the side of leniency. Jealous they doubtless were of her dazzling and faultless beauty, but how were they to give expression to it without making themselves ridiculous? Will they even be found minimizing the magic of the picture by pointing out some half-concealed defect? Here and there, perhaps, a note is struck which suggests enmity, but it is always the lightest of touches, and the picture survives them unimpaired. Listen to Mme. d'Abrantès: "It is impossible to form an idea of the perfection of the beauty of this truly extraordinary woman."[1] There is but one hesitation in the eulogies; the princess's ears were somewhat large, flat, and without hems: the merest trifle, in fact. Did not Her Highness wear her hair in a fillet? The cloven hoof is still less in evidence with the Polish Countess Potocka: "Princess Pauline

[1] *Mémoires de Madame la duchesse d'Abrantès*, I. 386.

Borghèse presented the type of classic beauty, such as is to be seen in Greek statues. In spite of all she has done to hasten on the effects of time, that evening, with a little artificial assistance, she still bore off the palm in everyone's opinion; not a woman would have dared to contend with her for the apple which Canova adjudged to her after he had seen her—if tales be true—unveiled. In addition to the most delicate, and also the most regular, of features imaginable, she possessed a figure whose lines were admirable—admired, indeed, too frequently."[1] Finally, the completest, although the briefest, eulogy is this, from a third: "Mme. Leclerc is beyond dispute the prettiest woman I have seen."[2] As for the men, they are no less unanimous and enthusiastic. For General Desaix, a sober diarist, reserved in his enthusiasms, she is simply "a very beautiful woman."[3] Arnault calls her "the prettiest at

[1] *Mémoires de la Comtesse Potocka*, p. 209.

[2] Georgette Ducrest, *Mémoires sur l'Impératrice Joséphine*, p. 72.

[3] *Femmes Françaises figurant à Milan. Notes de voyage du Général Desaix; Suisse et Italie*, 1797; in the *Carnet de la Sabretache*, Nov., 1898, p. 706.

this period so plentiful in pretty women."[1] Beugnot is more eloquent still in his terse note: "This princess is the type of French beauty, that is to say, of lissom beauty lit up with vivaciousness."[2] The more diffuse Thiébault gives vent to his admiration thus, characterized as it is by a naïve soldierly surprise: "A most magnificently made creature, with the most seductive ways, and the prettiest figure that nature has ever made, and one that, with a god-like liberality, is no stingier in displaying its charms than Heaven had been in endowing it."[3] Finally the pamphleteers themselves add their quota. The Jew Goldsmith admitted that in spite of her youthful irregularities Pauline still remained "very beautiful and fairly fresh,"[4] thus contradicting Mme. d'Abrantès, who declares her "already faded, even withered," on her return from Hayti,[5] a contradiction which is certainly quite disinterested.

[1] L. V. Arnault, *Souvenirs d'un sexagénaire*, II. 325.

[2] *Mémoires du Comte Beugnot*, p. 300.

[3] *Mémoires du Général baron Thiébault*, published under the direction of his daughter, Mlle. Claire Thiébault, from the original manuscript by Fernand Calmettes; Paris, 1894, III. 200.

[4] Lewis Goldsmith, *Histoire secrète du cabinet de Napoléon Buonaparte*, p. 127.

[5] *Mémoires de Madame la duchesse d'Abrantès*, I. 386.

Unfortunately the same agreement is to be found again in relation to Pauline's moral qualities and psychical attractions. The pages devoted by the Duchesse d'Abrantès to her school-girl pranks and to irresponsibilities worthy of a bird without a brain, are well known. To these there is nothing to add, unless it be from Arnault's word-picture of that famous dinner at Montebello to which he had been invited by Bonaparte, where he found the youthful conqueror surrounded by his relations and by the companions of his newly-won glory. It is Arnault's only portrait of Pauline, yet it suffices; it is complete, and his analysis is most intimate :—

"At dinner I was placed beside Paulette, who remembered having seen me at Marseilles, and, further, knew that I must be well informed about her, since I was a confidential friend of her future husband. She therefore treated me as an old acquaintance. What a curious mixture she was of everything that goes to the making of physical perfection combined with all that is, from a moral point of view, grotesque. While she was the prettiest woman that anyone could set eyes on, she was also the most irra-

tional that anyone could imagine. As deficient in equilibrium as a school-girl, talking at random,[1] laughing apropos of everything and also of nothing at all, mimicking the most dignified personages, putting out her tongue at her sister-in-law when the latter's eye was not on her, prodding me with her knees when I did not pay enough attention to her tomfooleries, and every now and then bringing down on herself one of those terrible glances with which her brother recalled to order the most refractory of men. But they had hardly any effect on her ; the next moment she was off again ; and the authority of the Commander of the army in Italy got the worst of the contest with a scatter-brained chit of a girl. Yet she was a good sort of girl, by nature rather than of set purpose, for she had no principles ; and was capable of kind action, if only as a mode of eccentricity."[2]

[1] " Some while back M. Arnault was asked what pleasure he could find in a conversation with a very pretty woman who talked a great deal and hadn't an atom of intelligence. He answered that the conversation would afford him any amount of pleasure. I should love to *see* her talk." (*Nain Jauniana, ou choix d'anecdotes, de traits et d'épigrammes, tirés du Nain Jaune, publié à Paris ; et du Nain Jaune réfugié à Bruxelles, terminé par le chansonnier du Nain Jaune ;* Brussels, 1817, p. 23.)

[2] L. V. Arnault, *Souvenirs d'un sexagénaire*, III. 30, 31.

All that remains to be done, then, is to enquire what this lack of moral discipline led to in connexion with "la diva Paolina's" erotic psychology.

"A most curious person to study," Mme. Junot said of her.[1] The study is particularly "curious" when it is pursued in the light of contemporary evidence.

There is no doubt that Pauline was one of the most remarkable, and one of the most energetic, of wooers of the Imperial epoch, far outstripping her sister Caroline, who cannot be credited with more than four or five lovers; or Elisa, the "Semiramis of Lucca," who, so far as is known, did not exceed the former number. Pauline "always preferred pleasure to greatness,"[2] says Ménéval; which is not hard to understand, psychologically and pathologically. In referring specially to Pauline, Chancellor Pasquier says: "Perhaps no woman since Messalina has surpassed her in the use to which she has dared to put her attractions." But was

[1] *Mémoires de Madame la duchesse d'Abrantès*, III. 162.

[2] Baron de Ménéval, formerly private secretary to Napoleon as First Consul and as Emperor, and also the Empress-Regent; *Napoléon et Marie-Louise; souvenirs historiques;* Brussels, 1845, VII. 14.

Pauline, after all, morally responsible for her actions? For whatever may be said about the "specific" disorder which she is alleged to have contracted, it is abundantly clear, though it would be inappropriate here to discuss the evidence in detail, that she was a victim to some form of erotic hysteria, and that under the influence of this complaint she gave way to irregularities which undermined her health and occasioned her medical advisers and her relatives the gravest anxiety. "It is clear," says Hallé, physician-in-ordinary to the imperial household, in a letter to Peyre, the Princess's own doctor, "that if she is not prompt [i.e. in battling with her disease] it will soon be too late. . . . We certainly must rescue this young and attractive woman from her doom. And if there is someone who is encouraging her failings, and is her accomplice, that person, whoever it may be, would not be blamed, whereas we should be blamed for having noticed nothing or permitted everything. I am not inclined to allow myself to pass for a fool, nor to let myself be accused of base and cowardly complaisance; but quite apart from this, this excellent but unhappy

woman must be saved. Her condition is a personal grief to me, but fortunately I cannot say I have no hopes. Be quick, therefore, my dear colleague, for there is no time to lose. Make use of my letter as you think fit, and enable me to speak frankly and freely. If we can only speak academically, we must leave the matter alone." All this makes it evident that Pauline's aberrations are to be attributed to a physical rather than to a moral cause ; she was, in short, an invalid—and her palace a hospital. Let us therefore now proceed to examine, as pathological phenomena, the various paroxysms of her malady.[1]

[1] From a letter printed by Arthur Levy in his *Napoléon intime*, Paris, 1897, pp. 317–319. This curious document was communicated to M. Arther Levy by our friend Henry Santhier-Villars, who writes to us that it came to him through the kindness of Dr. Jean Hallé, a descendant of the Emperor's doctor.

CHAPTER V

THE DUMMY HUSBAND

"SOME good people imagine that a prince is under consideration as a husband for the First Consul's sister." Thus, as early as the beginning of 1803, did the royalist agents write in their reports. Leclerc's body had not yet reached Paris, and yet Pauline's next wedding was being discussed. The royalist agents, however, made reassuring statements in advance concerning the check that was to be called against the combinations that Bonaparte was supposed to be devising. "It cannot be seriously believed that any prince would accept the alliance," is the conclusion they arrive at with placid self-confidence.[1] The irony of it was that six months later they were giving themselves the lie.

Soon after going to reside at the Hôtel

[1] Comte Remacle, *Bonaparte et les Bourbons; relations secrètes des agents de Louis XVIII à Paris sous le Consulat*, pp. 233, 234.

Charost, Pauline had become acquainted, at Lucien's house, with Prince Camillo Borghèse, introduced by Angiolini di Serra Verra, the Grand Duke of Tuscany's Paris agent. Borghèse had only been at Paris a few days ; his address was Hôtel d'Oigny, rue Grange-Batelière ; and he had begun his stay, according to some pamphleteers, by being a frequent visitor at the porter's lodge. " The first friends he made in the capital were the concierge of the house and his family."[1]

Borghèse has been exculpated on account of these modest visits by means of eloquence as brilliant as it is futile ; he was hardly in need of it. Being rich[2] (though, it is true, avarici-

[1] *Amours secrètes de Napoléon et des princes et princesses de sa famille, d'après les documents historiques de M. de Bonaparte ;* Paris, 1842, II. 13. This pamphlet is only a summary, by compilers of Louis Philippe's reign, of Doris de Bourges' pamphlet, *Amours secrètes de Napoléon Buonaparte,* by the author of the *Précis historique* and of the *Mémoires secrètes ;* Paris, 1815, 2 vols. While plagiarizing from it throughout, the compilers of 1842 hold Doris de Bourges' work in very low esteem, describing it as full of fictitious and garbled anecdotes — the very same ones that they themselves borrow !

[2] " He possessed an immense fortune in landed estate." (Th. Jung, lieutenant-colonel, *Lucien Bonaparte et ses mémoires,* II. 415.)

ous[1]), his name and relations might easily have opened other doors for him than that of the lodge of the rue Grange-Batelière. The princes of those days did not all belong to the Papal nobility.

Pauline seems to have been attracted from the very beginning. Borghèse could well hold his own as a suitor; a good presence, curly hair; elegant, despite incipient stoutness; nothing to say, but a lively way of saying it; in his general bearing something attractive, something of the vivid Italian ardour. He was young, twenty-eight years old;[2] a fine name and a great ancestry; great-nephew of Pope Paul V; and, lastly, Prince of Sulmona and of Rossano, a wedding-present likely to meet with the approval of a young woman belonging to a family which had not hitherto succeeded in attaining such a distinction.[3] Was not all this

[1] *Souvenirs de F. Blangini, maître de chapelle du roi de Bavière, membre de la Légion d'honneur et de l'Institut Historique de France* (1797–1834), *dédiés à ses élèves, publiés par son ami Maxime de Villemarest;* Paris, 1834, p. 184.

[2] Camillo Filippo Luigi Borghèse, born at Rome, July 19, 1775.

[3] "Borghese was a handsome youngster who brought her a very large fortune, diamonds which eclipsed all others in Paris, and, finally, the title of princess, hitherto unknown,

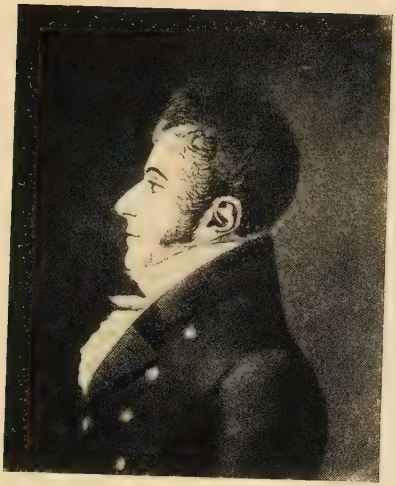
well calculated to favour Borghèse's pretensions? To decide matters, he, too, was surprisingly anxious to be included in the all-powerful family, and perhaps, also, quite eager to possess so radiant a fiancée. To compass the same ends, she also brings to bear all the ardour of naïve vanity, of youthful pride, and—who knows?—perhaps affection likewise; for her, for the moment:—

> "Quels meilleurs fruits que ceux dont on n'a point goûté?"

There was no long delay. From Lille, Messidor 20, year XI, Josephine, then on a journey with Bonaparte, writes to Hortense:—

"You doubtless know that Mme. Leclerc is going to marry; Prince Borghèse is to be the husband. Two days ago Bonaparte heard from her, saying she wanted him for her husband, and that she felt she would be very happy with him. She asks Bonaparte's permission for Prince Borghèse to write to him to ask her hand. Joseph and M. Angelini [i.e. Angiolini] seem to have been the match-makers. Supposing that

for excellent reasons, in the First Consul's family circle." (Arther Levy, *Napoléon intime*, p. 314.)



PRINCE BORGHESE

no one in your household has mentioned this to you, say nothing about it."[1]

The news did not long remain a secret. It filtered through to the public about the middle of Thermidor, the royalist agents notifying it under the date of the 22nd.[2] And, immediately after, Peltier bursts out into guffaws in the *Ambigu*, in London, and into congratulations to Bonaparte in an open letter. "I present you with my sincere felicitations," he writes, "on widow Leclerc's forthcoming marriage to Prince Camillo Borghèse. When I read the details of her grief I straightway became sorely afraid of her wanting to play the Malabar widow. . . . I do not despair of seeing her become a Lady-Pope some day, judging by the pace you are taking the world at now." Peltier had not come to the end of his maddening surprises.

The First Consul opposed no obstacle to the marriage, consenting to its celebration with the

[1] *Lettres de Napoléon à Joséphine pendant la première campagne d'Italie, le Consulat, et l'Empire ; lettres de Joséphine à Napoléon et de la même à sa fille ;* Paris, 1833, II. 228, Letter 10.

[2] Comte Remacle, *Bonaparte et les Bourbons ; relations secrètes des agents de Louis XVIII à Paris sous le Consulat*, p. 368.

sole stipulation that Pauline must first allow the ordinary term of mourning to expire. As sister of the Head of the State, ought she not to be the first to adhere to the article concerning "*Customs in use at Paris as regards mourning*," which deals with cases such as hers, and which had been published in the *Almanach national*? Mourning for a husband was to be one year and six weeks.[1] Now, it was barely eight months since Leclerc's death. Pauline must wait, therefore, from Messidor to Brumaire. But four months was a long wait, and Pauline not the kind of person to put up with it. As early as Fructidor 5 she signs the contract of marriage with Borghèse at her house, wherein she owns to possessing 800,000 francs, 500,000 of which were Napoleon's gift,[2] 300,000 being in dia-

[1] Here is the article relating to mourning for a husband: "The first three months, a dress of woollen material; for the first six weeks, head-dress and fichu of black crêpe; during the following six weeks, head-dress and fichu of white crêpe. The six succeeding months in black silk; in winter in paduasoy, in summer in Tours taffeta. The head-dress of white crêpe, trimmed. The three other months in black and white, and the six last weeks in white altogether." (*Almanach national de France*, year XII *of the Republic*, p. 769.)

[2] Paragraph one of article two of the marriage-contract. Cf. Th. Jung, lieutenant-colonel, *Lucien Bonaparte et ses mémoires*, II. 416, 417.

monds.[1] The following week she gave the First Consul the slip and promptly hurried to Joseph's house at Mortfontaine,[2] and there married. Not till two months later, in Brumaire, was the

[1] Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon et sa famille*, II. 225, asserts that these 300,000 francs' worth of diamonds in the marriage-contract only masked a personal gift to her from Napoleon in the year XI.

[2] "Mortfontaine (or Mortefontaine) was famous before Joseph Bonaparte stayed there. In the eighteenth century the domain was nothing but untilled land, barren rock, and marsh-land. It was a rich dilettante, M. Le Pelletier, known as de Mortefontaine, president of the Paris Parliament, who, in 1770, turned this wilderness into a charming park. In 1790, M. Durney, Court banker, developed the rich estate anew. Joseph completed his predecessor's work and spent enormous sums on extensive improvements; a Naiads' Grotto, an ice-house, an orangery, a theatre, an artificial mountain; taking such interest in Mortefontaine that he was often to be seen there in the middle of the workmen encouraging them and urging them on. It was his favourite residence; thither he came to rest from the labours of the Concordat, and of the treaties of Lunéville and Amiens. At Mortefontaine were received the ambassadors of the United States, who came to France in Oct., 1800, to draw up and sign the treaty regulating maritime commerce and the rights of neutrals. Joseph seems never to have left this favourite residence of his without regret; even on the throne of Naples, and still more so on the throne of Spain, his thoughts went back of their own accord to that charming estate where he spent the last years of the Empire. After Napoleon's fall it was offered for sale, and leased to a rich Prussian gentleman, named Schikler. In 1827 it was bought by the Prince de Condé, and, in 1850, passed to Mme. de Feuchères [his mistress] and subsequently to her niece, Mme. Corbin." (Maurice Vitrac, *Autour de Bonaparte, journal du Comte P. L. Roederer, ministre et conseiller d'Etat; notes intimes et politiques d'un familier des Tuileries;* Paris, 1909, p. 7.)

official wedding celebrated; thus saving appearances and making out Pauline's mourning to have lasted the year. The First Consul, however, by this secret marriage of Fructidor 13 had been befooled and deceived. He refused to sanction, by being present, this sham marriage ceremony, and, in order not to have any hand in this mockery of the proprieties, in this breach of the rules of a custom which he was just re-establishing, he left Paris before the ceremony and went to Boulogne.

Thither Pauline sent a letter after him, announcing her departure for Rome, to which city she was going to meet Borghèse's mother, the grand lady who, in her letters of invitation for her son's marriage, had ignored the marriage with Leclerc. "Paulette writes to me," the First Consul informs Joseph, "that her marriage has been notified publicly and that she is setting out for Rome to-morrow. It is desirable that you or mother should write a letter of introduction for her to Borghèse's mother. I likewise request you to inform her that I shall be willing to receive Borghèse's brother[1] as an

[1] Francesco, Prince Aldobrandini-Borghèse, born June 9, 1776, brigadier-general in the French army, married, April 11,

PAULINE BONAPARTE (PRINCESS BORGHESE)
From the portrait by Robert Lefevre in the Versailles Collection

officer under me if he desires to be a soldier."[1]

And, by the courier of Brumaire 19, he urges his sister to set out. He wishes to avoid the pain that he must give himself in making the remonstrances with her that are forced on him. This letter of Napoleon's is singularly eloquent and noble. It lays down for Pauline a programme of behaviour both strict and creditable. If she follows it, no protest will ever be lodged against her claim to be a charming paragon of beauty and of goodness. "And especially, see that your house is a happy one; and above all, no levity or caprices!" Good advice for a week and a day—but afterwards? As for the rest, here is the letter:—

1809, Adèle Marie Constance Françoise de la Rochefoucauld, born at Paris, Sept. 16, 1793, died at Magliarino, Nov. 2, 1873. Prince Francesco Aldobrandini-Borghèse died at Rome, May 29, 1839. A letter which Pauline wrote to him once occurred in a catalogue of autographs. "I am told, my dear little brother, that my letters give you pleasure," the princess wrote, "I have no need of that encouragement before sending you news of myself." She declared her health had become excellent, and "the good news which we receive from the army contributes towards its improvement in no small degree." (Cf. *Catalogue d'autographes Eugène Charavay*, Nov., 1891; offered for 25 francs.)

[1] Baron A. du Casse, *Supplément à la correspondance de Napoléon Ier*, pp. 25, 26.

"MADAME LA PRINCESSE BORGHÈSE,—I shall be away a few days more ; in the meantime the bad weather is coming, the Alps are getting covered with ice ; set out for Rome, then. Render yourself remarkable for sweetness, for kindliness towards everyone, and for the utmost consideration for the ladies (whether relatives or friends) at your mother's house. More will be expected from you than from anyone else ; in particular, conform to the customs of the country ; never despise anything ; express yourself pleased with everything, and do not say, 'We are better off in that way at Paris.' Show yourself very much attached to, and very respectful towards, the Holy Father, whom I love very much, and who, by reason of the simplicity of his habits, is worthy of the post he fills. Of all that will be told me of your doings, what I shall be most pleased to learn will be that you are good. The only nation which you are never to receive at your house is the English, so long as we are at war with them ; and you are never to allow any of them to become acquaintances of yours. Love your husband, see that your house is a happy one ; and above all, no levity or caprices. You are twenty-

four years old, and you ought to be grown up now, and sensible. I love you and shall always hear with pleasure that you are happy.

" Your dear brother,

" BONAPARTE."[1]

Happy ? Doubtless she will be so for a few weeks, for the time it will take to be initiated into the pleasures peculiar to her new title, to taste the monotonous splendours which fill the palace whither her husband leads her. But what about when the honeymoon is waning, always the same pictures on the same walls, always the same icy immobility in the ancient marbles, the same views seen, as the same tastefully dignified pictures, from the same windows ? And then, the palace is unhealthy.[2]

[1] *Revue Napoléonienne*, 1902, II. pp. 195–196. This curious letter has been republished, with some variants (from the original, it seems), in Dr. Poumiès de la Siboutie's *Souvenirs d'un médecin de Paris* (1789–1863) ; published by his daughters, Mmes. A. Branche and L. Dagoury, with introduction and notes by Joseph Durieux ; Paris, 1910, p. 272.

[2] " King Charles IV complained that when he took up his residence at the Borghèse palace the whole of it was not put at his disposal. He was forced to lodge part of his suite in houses near by. The villa Borghèse, which was put at their disposal, not being healthy, the King inspected the former Papal palace (Castel-Gandolpho) which has not met with his approval." (Report of the Prefect of Rome, July 12, 1812. *Archives nationales*, série F^7, carton 3776.)

And Borghèse. . . . Six months had not elapsed before Pauline set out on a journey, alone, already seized by the first symptoms of that peripatetic mania which was to retain its hold on her to the very end of her life.[1] From that date onward, it became a rooted, insatiable habit. From bathing-places to watering-places will she ramble at the bidding of her longing for movement and change, a wandering Jewess with imaginary sufferings, everlastingly athirst for adventures, finding solace in intrigues and her recompense in eroticisms. But, suddenly, in the middle of these lonely ramblings comes a bolt from the blue to afflict her ; on August 14, 1804, at Frascati,[2] Leclerc's child, little Dermide,

[1] " I have just learnt from Madame la princesse Borghèse that she is coming to Florence in two months' time ; I beg you, citizen minister, to acquaint me in what manner the First Consul wishes her to be treated at Florence, and whether it is his intention that I should give fêtes on her behalf. If so, I beg you to be kind enough to provide the expenses." (G. Clarke, minister-plenipotentiary of the French Republic in Tuscany, to Talleyrand, minister for Foreign Affairs ; Florence, Floréal 7, year XII (April 27, 1803) ; Archives of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Tuscany Papers, vol. 156, fol. 141 (No. 98). Paul Marmottan, *Documents sur le royaume d'Etrurie* (1801–1807) ; Paris, 1900, pp. 43, 44.)

[2] Frascati belonged to Lucien Bonaparte, who sold it, in 1808, to his brother Louis, for 200,000 francs. Cf. Lucien's letter to Signor Benoffi, Florence, April 26, 1808, 1 page, 4to,

died.[1] "No one has ever spoken of her sorrow for her son's death," someone has written;[2] which implies, to say the least of it, a charge against Pauline. Yet—"nothing equals the grief of this unfortunate mother," is the information sent from Lucca, Fructidor 9, year XII, by Derville-Maléchart, France's representative with the Republic of Lucca, to Tassoni, the Italian republic's minister at Florence.[3] Subsequent despatches, furthermore, show us that Pauline's health suffered severely through the loss of her child.[4] But it was with her grief as with her

in the *Catalogue d'une précieuse collection de lettres autographes concernant Napoléon Ier, sa famille, ses maréchaux, ses généraux, et ses ministres;* Paris, May, 1894, *pièce* No. 29.

[1] The official notification of Dermide Leclerc's death was published in the *Revue Napoléonienne*, Dec., 1901–Jan., 1902, pp. 137, 138.

[2] Gilbert Stenger, *La Société Française pendant le Consulat*, III. 148.

[3] *Revue Napoléonienne*, Dec., 1901–Jan., 1902, p. 96.

[4] "Her Imperial Highness is intending to leave to-morrow for France. Her health has been very unsatisfactory ever since her son's death, and for that reason she can only make the journey by easy stages. She is thinking of going to her estate at Montgobert." (Siméon, first secretary of the French embassy in Tuscany, to Talleyrand, minister for Foreign Affairs, Florence, Vendémiaire 6, year XII (Sept. 29, 1804). Archives of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Tuscany Papers, vol. 155, fol. 310, No. 209. Paul Marmottan, *Documents sur le royaume d'Etrurie*, p. 39.)

love-affairs—neither lasted for ever. A year later all will be over and done with, and her attention will be absorbed by thoughts by no means so bitter. She will be inaugurating her double life of princess and "light-o'-love" and will be struggling to reconcile the demands of that dual existence. For of Borghèse there is no further question by this time; as to his good points, incidental and personal, Pauline lost no time in coming to conclusions—uncomplimentary ones. If her early impressions of this lover with "an Adonis-like head, but with no brain inside, smiling but insipid,"[1] were favourable, she soon had to undergo a grievous disillusionment; Borghèse was far from being what Pauline had imagined and hoped. He had, it is true, "the appearance of possessing a constitution,"[2] but it was nothing more than appearances. When he was put to the test there was only one conclusion to come to; Pauline had been "let in." And what, for her, could be a more disappointing, a more distressing position? How could she retain any respect

[1] Louis Madelin, *Une famille parvenue; les Bonaparte en 1811–1812*; *Revue Hebdomadaire*, May 19, 1906, p. 270.

[2] Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon et sa famille*, II. 243.

for such a poor specimen of a husband? "To give herself to him was to give herself to nobody!"[1] exclaimed Thiébault, which is probably the echo of certain indiscreet confidential remarks of Pauline's that had reached his ears. She was perfectly open in her expressions of resentment, distress, and regret when she was imparting information to her lady friends, such as the Duchess d'Abrantès, or entertaining her lovers, such as Blangini. It was a brilliant reputation that she built up for Borghèse's amative potentialities! "She discussed the matter aloud with the most incredible freedom," says one of these most intimate friends of hers,[2] thereby lifting the veil from a corner of Pauline's lack of the moral sense, of her innate impulsive freedom from second thoughts. Inasmuch as love was the end and aim of life to her, she saw nothing extraordinary in parading its secrets before everyone's eyes, and being as far from shamefaced in her words as in her acts. And these little anecdotes that she retailed concerning Borghèse to all and sundry, do they not incidentally suggest excuses for what she

[1] *Mémoires du Général baron Thiébault*, II. 179.

[2] *Souvenirs de F. Blangini*, p. 151.

allows to be guessed of her life of dissipation and amorous intrigue? Married as she was to a cold and listless husband, was it not strict justice that she should seek some degree of compensation amongst more ardent lovers? There was something of strict equity in it, especially of equity as seen in the light of her temperament, her tastes, her needs, and her caprices.

Borghèse, on his side, offered no serious opposition. "He looked on, or seemed to look on, with indifference," affirms Mme. de Rémusat.[1] Sometimes, however, albeit very rarely, he played the part of the jealous husband. Thus, about 1806, he took umbrage at the frequency of one Comte de L——'s visits to Pauline; a sudden blaze, but a short one! Borghèse went off and consoled himself with her ladies-in-waiting.[2] That is why, no doubt, someone has written, with a candour that borders on the sublime: "Pauline endured her husband's neglect of her with resignation."[3]

[1] *Mémoires de Madame de Rémusat*, II. 188.

[2] Frédéric Masson, *La Princesse Pauline* (1805–1809); *Revue de Paris*, Feb. 15, 1909, p. 799.

[3] Félix Wouters, *Histoire de la famille Bonaparte depuis mil huit cent quinze jusqu'à nos jours*; Paris, 1849, p. 170.

But when we are discussing Pauline is it not really beside the point to lay all the blame on Borghèse? His share of it consists in not belonging to the level that Pauline expects and insists on. What may charm some of her ladies-in-waiting is not good enough for her. Hence the above mistake. Borghèse understood immediately and was not obstinate; he retired to the background, taking it for granted that he is too mediocre an Hippolytus for this Phædra. Little drinking-parties—with developments later—do occur; but anything fiery or overwhelming in its energy he does not want. And so, when all was said, he did not aspire to be the hero of the piece; he rests content with the rôle that Pauline allots him, and, "super" as he was in the imperial theatre, he accepts, in his married life likewise, the part of dummy husband.

BOOK II

THE IMPERIAL VENUS

CHAPTER I

NAPOLEON AND HIS SISTER[1]

WHAT attitude did the Emperor adopt towards Pauline subsequently to the date when he made his family a factor in the political organization of the Empire, when it became his wish that it should take an active part in the realization of the Napoleonic system? What measure of toleration did he extend to his sister's transgressions? How did he keep within limits the scandal whose mire shot up, in consequence of the behaviour of some of her lovers, to sully his own great name? We have already touched on the subject, but here it is desirable to produce the evidence furnished by Napoleon himself.

[1] We shall not pay any attention in this chapter, or elsewhere in this book, to the charge of incest brought against Napoleon and Pauline by Restoration pamphleteers and their successors of to-day. All that need be said on this point we believe we have said in our volume, *Napoléon adultère*; Paris, n.d. [1908], pp. 229 *et seq.*

From the earliest days of the Empire, Pauline remained more or less outside the Napoleonic system. Caroline becomes a queen; Elisa almost omnipotent in Tuscany; Pauline will have nothing, except, one day, the little principality of Guastalla, a miserable market-town peopled with lepers, beggars, and a poverty-stricken middle-class. The truth is, then, that the Emperor was alive to the fact that she was incapable of presiding over the destinies of a feudatory province of the Empire, for at Naples, it was not the ever-absent Murat who reigned, but rather Caroline; and what was Bacciochi at Lucca? This creature of pleasure Napoleon left to her pleasures, on condition that she kept within bounds and respected conventions. Evasion of this obligation brings with it an immediate recall to order from the Emperor, wherever he may be. No doubt, her charm, her looks, her natural, or at any rate well assumed, unselfishness,[1] the friendly accommodating attitude she sometimes adopted

[1] At Elba the Emperor said of her, "She is the member of the family who has given me the least trouble." (Pons [de l'Hérault], *Souvenirs et anecdotes de l'île d'Elbe*, edited from the original MS. by Léon-Pélissier; Paris, 1897, p. 68.)

towards Josephine;[1] all this encouraged Napoleon to prefer her to the importunate, self-seeking Caroline who sometimes rebelled against the imperial will, or to Elisa, undignified whenever she was grateful, and so shrewish![2] But this preference was never allowed as a plea for relaxation in the rules governing Pauline's behaviour. Or if they relaxed sometimes, it was never past breaking-point; but if, now and again, her brother's anger did thunder down on her, it was not for want of repeated warnings. We have already seen how, in the above-quoted letter of Brumaire 19, year XII, he requires of Pauline, with very wise tact and moderation, that she shall conform to the conventions of Roman life, of the world into which her new marriage was introducing her. The advice remained a dead letter so far as the Princess Borghèse was concerned, and complaints reached the Emperor's ears which resulted in the despatch

[1] Comte Remacle, *Bonaparte et les Bourbons; relations secrètes des agents de Louis XVIII à Paris sous le Consulat*, p. 180, under the date Nov. 18, 1802.

[2] Pauline was "the one of whom he was most fond, without, however, ever letting his affection get the upper hand." (*Mémoires de Joseph Fouché, duc d'Otrante*, II. 43.)

of further orders. Fesch is the intermediary through whom Napoleon transmits this restatement, and what he says, by way of explanation, to her uncle is not devoid of sting. "Tell her then from me that she is now no longer beautiful, that soon she will be still farther from it, and that she ought to be good and respected throughout her life."[1] Such qualities are those of the heart only, the only ones that Napoleon requires of this sister of his, perfectly well aware as he is that it would be waste of time to require of her those of the head. To be good, to be respected, that also is to contribute towards her brother's political system. The latter, therefore, will not tire of speaking and writing to her on that subject, and the letter which he asks Fesch to deliver to Pauline is significant from that point of view.

"MADAME ET CHÈRE SŒUR,—I learn to my sorrow that you have not had the good sense to conform to the manners and customs of the town of Rome; that you exhibit contempt for the inhabitants, and that your eyes are persistently

[1] The Emperor to Cardinal Fesch; Paris, April 10, 1806. *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier, publiée par ordre de l'Empereur Napoléon III*, IX. 321, No. 7678.

fixed on Paris. Preoccupied as I am with important business, I am nevertheless desirous that you should be acquainted with my intentions, in the hope that you will act in conformity with them. Love your husband and your relations, be obliging, accommodate yourself to the customs of the town of Rome, and be quite clear about this, that, if, at the age at which you have now arrived, you allow yourself to be governed by bad advice, you can no longer reckon on me. As for Paris, you may be sure that you will find no encouragement there, and that I shall never receive you there otherwise than with your husband. If you quarrel with him, the fault will be yours, and then France will be forbidden you. You will lose your happiness and my friendship." [1]

Except for being more definite in the threat concerning his sanction, it is a repetition of his letter from the camp at Boulogne, and a type of those Pauline will continue to receive, from Bayonne, for instance, in 1808, wherein she is once more counselled to "be affectionate; be

[1] The Emperor to Princess Pauline Borghèse; Paris, April 6, 1806. *Correspondance de Napoléon I^er^*, IX. 319, No. 7674.

affable towards everyone; cultivate an even temperament"; and, truly a piece of unseasonable advice: "make the prince happy."[1] We see how, after two years' interval, the Emperor's patience is not worn out, never will be worn out. And if—and even this much is open to question—Pauline ceases to be on comfortable terms with Borghèse, she will, at all events, never have a break in her friendship with Napoleon. Did she not grow more and more accommodating to keep and to strengthen it? Why, if not with that in view, did she carry this so far as to subserve her brother's amours in the choice of her ladies-in-waiting? "I note with gratification that you are pleased with your lady-in-waiting,[2] and with your Piedmontese ladies," wrote Napoleon to her, May 26, 1808.[3] It was just on one of these ladies-in-waiting, Mlle. de Mathis, that his

[1] The Emperor to Princess Pauline Borghèse, Bayonne, May 26, 1808. *Archives nationales, série AF* IV., *carton* 876. Léon Lecestre, *Lettres inédites de Napoléon Ier*, I. 197, No. 284.

[2] This was the Comtesse de Cavour. *Almanach impérial pour* 1809, p. 81.

[3] The Emperor to Princess Pauline Borghese, Bayonne, May 26, 1808. *Archives nationales, série AF* IV., *carton* 876. Léon Lecestre, *Lettres inédites de Napoléon Ier*, I. 197, No. 284.

choice had fallen.[1] Small and fair, and a trifle fat, nobody, generally speaking, saw anything out of the common in her.[2] Pauline assisted these transient amours with discreet zeal. "The princess, like a good little sister, gives introductions to His Imperial and Royal Majesty," is a contemporary jest.[3] But, in this respect, was not Pauline but a successor to Caroline, who had, so to speak, covered with the mantle of her forethoughtfulness the Emperor's relations with one of her ladies, Eléonore Denulele de la Plaigue?[4] This considerate behaviour, however, was not a thing on which either party could plume himself or herself, subsequently, at will. Proof of this, as regards Pauline, is to be found, when, in 1810, she gave currency to a certain joke at the

[1] *L'Almanach impérial pour* 1809, p. 81, calls her Mme. de Malhis, lady-in-waiting. The orthography of the name was corrected in the *Almanach impérial pour* 1810, p. 80, which says, *Mme. la baronne de Mathis.*

[2] *Journal du Maréchal de Castellane* (1804–1862); Paris, 1897, I. 85.

[3] Stanislas Girardin, *Mémoires, journal et souvenirs;* Paris, 1834, II. 339.

[4] Cf. *M. M——, ancien officier d'artillerie, Histoire du prétendu rapt de Mme. la comtesse de L—— (Luxbourg) par Buonaparte et Murat, ou réponse au mémoire de M. J. A. F. Revel;* Paris, 1816, 44 pp.

expense of Marie-Louise, as we may read in Fouché's Memoirs: "Seeing her pass by in a salon, she allowed herself to make a certain sign behind her back with two fingers, tittering as she did it; a sign that people only use in moments of vulgar ridicule of over-trustful and deceived husbands."[1] And did not Lewis Goldsmith say, earlier still, in 1814: "She is very bright and has plenty of wit; in her sallies, home-truths and sarcasms sometimes escape her directed against the Imperial Holy Family at whom she laughs all day"?[2] Really, the Emperor has not to tolerate either sarcasms or ridicule. For the family, Pauline has "the feelings that she ought to have."[3] If she had any feelings that required hiding, the Emperor would know of them nevertheless; there were couriers acting under instructions

[1] *Mémoires de Joseph Fouché, duc d'Otrante*, II. 47. This passage has been copied, word for word, in the *Amours secrètes de Napoléon et des princes et princesses de sa famille*. Cf. 1842 edition, II. 70.

[2] Lewis Goldsmith, *Histoire secrète du cabinet de Napoléon Buonaparte*, p. 127.

[3] The Emperor to Prince Eugène, vice-king of Italy, Rambouillet, Aug. 23, 1806. *Archives nationales, série AF* IV., *carton* 870. Léon Lecestre, *Lettres inédites de Napoléon Ier*, I. 73, No. 907.

from the Minister of Police.[1] No more childish pranks now, liable to create public scandals. No more is heard of "Paulette," the name which "suggests Italy," a "pretty, charming, uncommon name," but "somewhat childish" and "suitable for a little girl." Now it is "Pauline" that she is to be known as, for that is "different, being noble and suggestive of Corneille."[2] But did she herself ever trouble her head about Corneille?

One question remains to be examined, that of the Emperor's knowledge concerning her lovers. Generally speaking, and so long as their behaviour did not include conceited advertisement of their luck, they received only silent contempt and indifference from him. What sanction, then, for M. de Montbreton, the princess's riding-master? None; M. de Montbreton's amorous admiration for Pauline dated back to the Directory period, to the evening of that famous ball given by Mme.

[1] The Emperor to General Savary, duc de Rovigo, Minister of the General Police; Saint-Cloud, Nov. 30, 1811. *Archives nationales, série AF* IV., *carton* 895. Léon Lecestre, *Lettres inédites de Napoléon Ier*, II. 182, No. 907.

[2] Frédéric Masson, *La Princesse Pauline*, 1805–1809 *Revue de Paris*, Feb. 15, 1900, p. 796.

Permon, whereat Pauline appeared so divinely perfect in her radiant and dazzling beauty. With a coiffure of little strips of tiger-skin surmounted by a golden bunch of grapes, enveloped in a transparent cloud of muslin encrusted with golden vine-branches, and her arms bare, "la diva Paolina" that evening achieved the most complete, and the most exquisite, of her victories.[1] And, just as she had subdued to her service M. de Montbreton's ardour, she had roused the passions of an overbearing, enterprising man who was celebrated for his luck, M. de Montrond. He, too, was present at the ball.

Montrond was a personality of the period. Philippe François Casimir, as his Christian names ran, was born at Besançon, on February 10, 1769, the son of an officer in the French Guards, and of a fiery royalist mother who subsequently returned from her voluntary exile pitted by smallpox, and deaf.[2] At nineteen years of age Montrond was a lieutenant in the Mestre-de-Camp Cavalry, and he took part in

[1] Concerning this ball see *Mémoires de Madame la duchesse d'Abrantès*, II. 22, 23.

[2] Alfred Marquiset, *Une merveilleuse : Mme. Hamelin* (1776–1851); Paris, 1909, p. 76.

the early fights of the 1792 campaign, as A.D.C., successively, to Mathieu Dumas, Théodore de Lameth, and La Tour-Manbourg. His dandified ways were famous. "What scent will M. le Comte use this campaign?" his valet used to ask before each departure. M. de Montrond avoided taking part in those that savoured of Jacobinism. In August, 1792, he resigned, which ultimately led to his being put under lock and key at Saint-Lazare. There he came to know that frivolous, amorous, Aimée de Coigny, a fellow-prisoner, whose dainty charms André Chénier was to sing:—

"La grâce décorait son front et ses discours."[1]

We know how M. de Montrond married her, to abandon her soon afterwards, flitting from bedroom to bedroom, from Mme. Récamier's to Mme. Hamelin's, from the sentimental surrender of Lady Yarmouth, who gave him a son, Lord Seymour, to Pauline's voluptuous frenzies. As alert with men as with women, it is to him that we owe that repartee to a former

[1] *Poésies d'André Chénier*, prefaced by a notice by H. de Latouche; Paris, 1907, p. 268. Concerning Aimée de Coigny, cf. *Mémoires de Aimée de Coigny*, introduction and notes by Etienne Lamy, Paris, n.d. [1902].

regicide-Conventionalist who was winning from him at cards: "You fellows have got into the habit of 'cutting' kings (*couper des rois*), haven't you?" His, too, the impertinent reply to a lady whose dance with him he had taken the liberty of ignoring: "You are acquainted with history, M. de Montrond?" "Certainly." "Well, Louis XIV was right when he maintained that punctuality is King's civility." "Yes, Madame, but (with a glance at his cross-examiner's ample bosom) he was quite wrong when he said that there were no longer any Pyrenees."[1] Besides, to these attractions of ready and caustic repartee, he added others, more substantial ones. He was "suave, fair, and rosy, with a Faublas figure, Hercules' shoulders, and the gracefulness of Adonis; a sword and spirit which commanded the respect of men, an eye and an energy which promised protection to women."[2] To this kind of protection Pauline was never averse. The period, however, was unfortunately not one when she was wholly free to make the most of it. M. de Montrond belonged to little

[1] Alfred Marquiset, *Une merveilleuse : Mme. Hamelin*, p. 88.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 77.

cliques in which devotion to the Emperor was not regarded as essential. He was implicated in certain intrigues which were not unknown to the police, and he let fall epigrams and witticisms which did not pass unheeded. Napoleon took advantage of these facts to relieve Pauline of a lover who was inclined to boast. "She was tenderly loved by her brother," says Ménéval, "in spite of some minor annoyances which she occasionally gave rise to."[1] Was M. de Montrond one of these "minor annoyances"? No exact information is available, but the police requested him to take a rest after his amorous exertions, in the department of Deux-Nèthes at Antwerp, where he was thoughtfully recommended to the special care of the prefect, M. le chevalier de Voyer d'Argenson. There he took up his quarters, in 1811, at the time Pauline was staying at the watering-place of Spa. From Antwerp to Spa was put a few posts. M. de Montrond promptly covered them, and came to reside in the same house as his imperial mistress. "The result of this stay was, it is

[1] Baron de Ménéval, *Napoléon et Marie-Louise : Souvenirs historiques*, VII. 14.

said, a request for a pardon for him transmitted by the Princess to her illustrious brother, but the request did not meet with the hoped-for result."[1] It succeeded, nevertheless, thus far, that the exile was allowed nearer the capital, being authorized to stay at Ham, in Picardy, and subsequently at Châtillon-sur-Seine. By this date it seems fairly clear that he had broken off all relations with Princess Borghèse who, on the other hand, we know to have been fully occupied with M. de Canouville. It was, therefore, without leaving regrets behind him that M. de Montrond suddenly escaped from this last dwelling-place, July 12, 1812. He passed over into England, where he remained till 1814. On returning from Elba, the Emperor, knowing him to be Talleyrand's "damned soul," entrusted to him that mysterious mission to Vienna which is still but half understood. There he failed brilliantly. M. de Montrond's end was worthy of his early days. A guest at the Prince of Benevento's table, this high patronage opened many doors to him. He does not seem to have had any desire to induce

[1] Alfred Marquiset, *Une merveilleuse : Mme. Hamelin*, p. 150.

Pauline's to open for him again. "He was received everywhere, but without much respect," writes Mme. Gabrielle Delessert, née Laborde, of him on the back of a pastel she made of him in 1832. After Talleyrand's death, being without resources, he opened a secret gambling-hell. The police shut their eyes, which allowed him to die (Oct. 18, 1843) without having become acquainted with the hard measure meted out by the tribunal for misdemeanours.

. . . . . .

If the Emperor thought nothing of the attentions paid to Pauline by Marie-Louise's uncle, the Prince of Würzburg,[1] if he shut his eyes to an undoubted intrigue with Maxime de Villemarest, Borghèse's secretary, and subsequently hack-writer-reviser to the publisher Ladvocat,[2] it was not the same with regard to M. Jules de Canouville who, somewhere about 1810, made the utmost of one of the Princess's

[1] *Mémoires de la Comtesse Potocka*, p. 276.

[2] Augustin-Thierry, *Les grandes mystifications littéraires, l'industrie des faux mémoires sous Louis-Philippe*, in the *Figaro*, Saturday, April 9, 1910.

amorous caprices. Canouville was termed by Marbot, who knew him, "one of the army dandies," belonged to Berthier's famous general-staff, fit, according to Thiébault, "to rank as a harem equal to satisfying the whims of ten sultanas."[1] This same Thiébault adds that Napoleon's sisters made the most of them. "People talked of nothing but Pauline's intrigues," writes Countess Potocka, "and they certainly did provide material for lengthy discussion."[2] Canouville's bragging, moreover, was of great use in maintaining the interest. "His intimate relations with her soon acquired a scandalous publicity."[3]

It is due to him to observe that Pauline co-operated actively in this open declaration of these liaisons. She "gave herself a free hand in the extent of her control over her favourites, and took a kind of pride in making her preferences public property."[4]

Two occurrences, at least, substantiate this.

[1] *Mémoires du Général baron Thiébault*, IV. 41.

[2] *Mémoires de la Comtesse Potocka*, p. 209.

[3] *Amours secrètes de Napoléon et des princes et princesses de sa famille*, 1842 edition, II, pp. 14, 15.

[4] Georgette Ducrest, *Mémoires sur l'impératrice Joséphine*, p. 74.

M. DE CANONVILLE

The first was made known, quite innocently, we may believe, by the dentist Bousquet, who was summoned one day for a consultation at Princess Borghèse's house. There he found a young man in a dressing-gown lying at his ease on a sofa. The Princess was in the same room. It was on her account that Bousquet had been called to render his services. "Sir," said the charming young man to him, "be careful, I implore you, in what you are going to do. I am most particular about my Paulette's teeth, and I shall hold you responsible for any misadventure." Whereto Bousquet made answer with deference and respect, "Be calm, my prince; I take all responsibility on your Imperial Highness's account; there is no ill effect of any kind to fear." Bousquet skilfully performed the operation to a running accompaniment of instructions from the "charming young man," and then, on his way out, after hastening to reassure the ladies- and gentlemen-in-waiting with good news as to the Princess's health, went on to add, with the candour of amiable ignorance, "Her Imperial Highness is very well, and ought to be well contented with the tender devotion of her august husband. He has just

given most touching proof of it in my presence by his extreme solicitude. His anxiety was extreme; it was only with difficulty that I could reassure him concerning the results of the little operation. It will be a pleasure to me to repeat at Paris what I have just witnessed, a true pleasure to have such instances of conjugal devotion to quote, seeing how rare such a quality is in persons of such high degree. I am indeed touched."[1] They had self-control enough not to burst out laughing in his face; the "charming young man" was no other than M. de Canouville.

Such disdain for discretion, and taking such liberties with conventionalities, naturally brought their love-affair to a bad end. As long as they went their way at a distance from the Emperor's eye there was nothing to fear but his brief and stinging recalls to order; but things took a different turn directly unruly manifestations took place under his very nose. From Erfurt he had brought back, among the presents from Alexander I, three sable pelisses, exceptional in quality and chosen for their flawlessness. From

[1] Georgette Ducrest, *Mémoires sur l'impératrice Joséphine*, p. 74.

one the Emperor had made the famous pelisse referred to in memoirs dealing with the 1812 campaign ; the second went to Bernadotte's wife ; the third to Pauline. She did not keep it long ; on de Canouville's happening to mention that a bordering of that description would set off his uniform well, his mistress compelled him to accept the Emperor's present. To a review which was held soon after de Canouville went, wearing his gorgeous imperial furs for everyone to admire ; but, quite against his will, he attracted the admiration of one who knew them only too well. It so happened that his horse took to prancing backwards suddenly towards the group of marshals who surrounded the Emperor, and, in spite of all the efforts that de Canouville could make, nothing could prevent the unruly beast's hind-quarters from barging into the flank of the Emperor's mare. Napoleon turned round, recognized the pelisse, and guessed who it was that wore it ; Canouville got his beast away and regained his position among the Prince of Wagram's staff-officers. It was not till he returned from the review that the Emperor's wrath burst on Berthier. The matter was settled in a few words, and that very even-

ing de Canouville received orders to take the Minister's despatches to Masséna, then busy with the war in Spain.[1]

While M. de Canouville was risking his life in the ambuscades of the Salamanca road, Pauline was giving prompt attention to the task of finding his successor. Said Beugnot of her in 1809:[2] "She is rapidly running through all the pleasures which belong to her age, her beauty, and her fortunate independence." M. de Canouville found this out by experience. Pauline had selected as his rival a comrade-in-arms, Captain Achille Tourteau de Septeuil, son of a former valet-de-chambre to Louis XVI. But the young man was in love, and his affection caused him to be so little of a courtier that he refused the august proposals; he was above dividing his attentions. Pauline's disappointment straightway sought, and found, a revenge. The War Minister sent M. de Septeuil to Spain to rejoin his regiment of dragoons. On the way

[1] Cf. the accounts of this adventure in the *Mémoires du Général baron Thiébault*, IV. 442; *Mémoires du Général baron de Marbot*, II. 446; Georgette Ducrest, *Mémoires sur l'impératrice Joséphine*, p. 74, *et seq.*

[2] *Mémoires du Comte Beugnot*, p. 300.

he met M. de Canouville who had been sent to the Peninsula a second time. As they rode side by side, therefore, they personified the extremities of favour and disgrace. One had gone too far, the other not far enough. This campaign was fatal to M. de Septeuil. On May 5, 1811, as he was charging into the fray at Fuentes-de-Onoro at the head of his dragoons, a bullet from the enemy tore off his thigh,[1] thus setting him free to return, a cripple and an invalid, to his virtuous love-affair, and to philosophize on the unjust and spiteful devices of the little blind god. Canouville's experience of them was likewise bitter in the extreme. After sending him back to Spain four times, they ended by getting tired of making him carry despatches. In 1812 he was ordered to join the *Grand-Armée* against Russia, "which occasioned deep distress, it would seem, to Pauline and to his numerous creditors."[2]

In spite of her manœuvres round M. de Septeuil, she seems nevertheless to have returned to Canouville at this date. Every fortnight she

[1] *Biographie des hommes vivants ;* Paris, Jan., 1819, V. 356.

[2] *Amours secrètes de Napoléon et des princes et princesses de sa famille*, 1842 edition, II. 56.

commissioned a courier to find her lover in Russia and speak to him, "as a letter did not reassure her sufficiently."[1] This courier had but few journeys to accomplish. On September 27, 1812, Pauline being then at Aix-les-Bains, she learnt simultaneously of the red and white victory of the Moskowa and of Canouville's death.[2] A bullet had carried away his head. When he was lifted out of the purple blood that streamed from him, a miniature of Pauline was found on him, under his uniform ; this was taken to Murat, who sent it back to his sister-in-law.[3] Thus tragically did two of the Princess Borghèse's love-affairs terminate, two in which we may observe what it was that compelled the Emperor to use severity. In Montrond's case he was punishing bragging and suspicious intrigue ; in Canouville's, scandalous ostentation in connexion with youthful indiscretion. In the one instance he was freeing his sister from entanglement in equivocal and compromising political

[1] Georgette Ducrest, *Mémoires sur l'impératrice Joséphine*, p. 74.

[2] Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon et sa famille* (1811–1813) ; Paris, 1906, VII. 381.

[3] Georgette Ducrest, *Mémoires sur l'impératrice Joséphine*, p. 74.

schemes ; in the second from a fatal and final scandal. But, with all this, it would be rash to maintain that he rescued Pauline from Cupid.

CHAPTER II

A GENTLEMAN OF THE OLD SCHOOL AND THE MODEST MUSICIAN

M. DE FORBIN undoubtedly belonged to the nobility. Born at La Rogue, in the Bouches-du-Rhône, he was in the pink of his twenty-seven years when he met Pauline at Plombières, in 1806. At that date he had not yet attracted the notice of the public by means of literary and artistic qualities out of the common. He only shone as a brilliant maker of couplets which he set to rhyme by the dozen. *Sterne, ou le voyage sentimental,* a vaudeville comedy, which appeared in 1800 in a neat octavo form, formed practically his only claim on the attention of the *Académie des Beaux-Arts* of which the Restoration, in its anxiety to reward all deserving cases, was going to make him a member.[1] His pictorial abilities, likewise,

[1] For M. de Forbin's painting, cf. an article in the *Gazette de France*, Wednesday, Nov. 25, 1812, pp. 1318–1319. As for his literary work, the Restoration judged that more severely.

COMTE DE FORBIN

had not as yet revolutionized the arts and forced the doors of the Louvre to open to him, the Louvre, which he was one day going to manage with a careful incompetence which became notorious. The unveiled charms of her from whom Canova modelled his imperial and immortal Venus, may have developed his artistic tastes, but he was so extremely modest that he only gave the smallest indication of them, as in the "Death of Pliny during the Eruption of Vesuvius" for example. He was, in short, one of those brilliant amateurs, wholly superficial, nothing but a talker, a fine figure of a man, a lady-killer, scornfully elegant—a quality which always impresses women—in his demeanour. He found favour directly, no niggardly favour either ; on October 5 following he was appointed chamberlain to the Princess. And so he remained within his fair wooer's reach, if we may so describe it.

From start to finish this romance was not a lengthy one ; it barely lasted out the year. Whether it was deception, or whether it was weariness, no one knows, but M. de Forbin did

See, concerning his *Souvenirs de Sicile*, published in 1823, a stinging article in *La Quotidienne*, Sunday, Aug. 10, 1823, pp. 3, 4.

get out of hand—if we may drop into the metaphor once more. Souvenirs of this one of Pauline's adventures only survive in the shape of one love-letter, so far as he was concerned, and, in her case, debts; for "Forbin proved expensive."[1] This gentleman's sensitiveness was of an easy-going, accommodating description in relation to his mistress's liberality—a custom which points to illustrious precedents in the Great Century.

We know what it cost Mme. de Polignac to have a Vaudreuil on her hands. It was not without reason that Pauline begged her agent to call in her income from her estates, lamenting, "I am decidedly poor."[2] M. de Forbin had contributed materially to worries of this kind. But there is something better than figures to bear witness to the character of his influence over Pauline. This is the long love-letter which she sends him during a separation which she is

[1] Frédéric Masson, *La Princesse Pauline* (1805–1809), *Revue de Paris*, Feb. 15, 1900, p. 821.

[2] Signed autograph letter to M. Michelot, Nov. 22, 1810, 1 p., 4to. *Catalogue d'autographes, Etienne Charavay*, March, 1888, No. 19. To become acquainted with Pauline's pecuniary difficulties, it is necessary to read right through the thirty-five letters to her agent which occur (No. 29) in this same catalogue of autographs.

prolonging through the departments of Var, Hautes-Alpes, and Bouches-du-Rhône, testing the ineffectual virtues of the waters of Gréoulx. This loving epistle is long enough, but that is not a serious matter, for Pauline's amorous correspondence is so rare that we may well be pardoned for quoting it here in full. Except for her letters to Fréron, it is the only love-letter of hers known, and it is well calculated to make us regret those that it has been thought advisable to destroy.[1] In her illegible, nervy handwriting on the green-bordered paper which she was in the habit of using,[2] she scribbles to her absent lover as follows :—

[1] The text is given by M. Masson in his fragment in the *Revue de Paris*, Feb. 15, 1900. No source is there indicated. We have, however, rediscovered it. The letter has been noticed as an item in the famous collection of Alfred Morrison, of London. The catalogue describes it as consisting of pp. 4 in 4to, dated " Perugia, June 14." M. Frédéric Masson, however, dates it from Gréoulx, June 10, and since he seems to have seen the original, his date appears to be one to accept. Cf. *Catalogue of the Collection of Autograph Letters and Historical Documents formed between* 1865 *and* 1882 *by Alfred Morrison, compiled and annotated under the direction of A. W. Thibaudeau ;* London, 1883, folio, I. 97.

[2] Cf. a letter to Prince Félix Bacciochi, Pisa, Dec. 20 1824, pp. 2 in 8vo. *Catalogue d'une précieuse collection de lettres autographes concernant Napoléon I^er^, sa famille, ses maréchaux, ses généraux, et ses ministres ;* Paris, May, 1894, No. 60.

"GRÉOULX, *June* 10, 1 *o'clock a.m.*

"BELOVED,—No letters from you this morning. I am most anxiously awaiting one, considering you said in your last that you were feverish. I hope that nothing will come of it and that my A. [amant ? adoré ? aimé ?] will be perfectly well. This morning I took my bath and drank four glasses of water, which went down well enough, but on coming out of my bath I find myself very weak, but I am assured that it does me good. Little Marie [?] is going on well ; she is nearly cured. You have written to Ma . . . that you will soon be coming to Aix, and that you have been ill, but that Mme. Derville's very careful tending, and that *you have been so well coddled*, that[1] you feel much better for it. Mme. Derville is a lucky person ! To take care of you, to see you, to confess her feelings towards you openly ; her lot is an enviable one. As for myself who am forced to put a check on myself, to be reserved, but who love you, cherish you, have given you already so many proofs and who can only be happy

[1] [To retain Pauline's way of expressing herself necessitates throwing over English conventions to the same extent as the original departs from French ones.—Translator's note.]

through you; oh, are you not my husband? Has mine deserved that title, so sweet, so sacred? No; he has not deserved it, for, if so, *you would not be mine.* And so it is necessary to return me love for love, trust for trust . . . to believe that all I do is for our good, for the good of our love. I have thoroughly considered matters, and I am more sure than ever that all around us are fully persuaded that all is over between us and that we can feel at ease. Otherwise, what will happen? The doctor has quite made up his mind to raise hell and go away. It was he who revealed everything to M. Mo . . . not through malice, but through fear, through stupidity. Mother and my uncle know everything, for you have no idea of what I went through at Lyons, the tears that I shed on seeing we were discovered. Mme. de B—— [Bréhan[1]] took advantage of the moment to tell me that the way you behaved in her presence was awful, that she was not the kind of person to put up with our forgetting ourselves before her as we had done at Paris. You understand how I was likely to suffer, considering that I am kind-hearted and that I had taken her into my

[1] La Baronne Louis de Bréhan, lady-in-waiting.

confidence without reserve. M. de Mon . . . [Montbreton], you know better than anybody how he has behaved. He has been the cause of our separation and of a deal of trouble.[1] He has betrayed my trust in him in a way that is very hard on a . . . [?]. Little Mi . . . [Millo] has shown herself unworthy of being a confidante, and so I may be sorry for her and kind to her, but no more of trusting her; Mlle. D—— [Dormy[2]] is a good girl, but there is no reason to trust her; she is very fond of the little one. Mme. Du . . . [Ducluzel[3]] does not love you; she is afraid of that compromising her. Ad . . . [Adèle[4]] is a tattler; Mme. de Ba . . . [Barral[5]] is neither a good friend nor a bad enemy. She did not wish to be useful to us. M. and Mme. de St. Ma . . . [Maur[6]] don't count. So I only

[1] Montbreton having been Pauline's lover, it may be queried whether his behaviour as regards Forbin was not dictated by jealousy.

[2] Lady-in-waiting to Princess Borghèse.

[3] Housekeeper, says M. Frédéric Masson.

[4] Chamber-maid.

[5] La Baronne de Barral, lady-in-waiting. The majority of the persons here reviewed by the Princess, are mentioned as belonging to the personnel of her establishment in various imperial almanacs.

[6] Dupré Saint-Maur, private secretary to the Princess.

see Minette, Emilie, Nini.[1] To impose on everybody the greatest caution will be necessary; sacrifices, self-denial will be needed, too, if you want to keep me. I will let you know in writing how you are to behave; you will have to put up with it, and believe that I suffer more than you from restrictions which will save us from much annoyance and even from losing each other altogether. Besides, if my husband is coming it would certainly be necessary to resign ourselves to that. Accordingly, I am only providing against what will happen. Good-bye, I am going to try to have a rest, for I have never written for so long straight off, but you know well I perform impossibilities for you. This evening I will write again."

And in the evening, up in her room again, she continues her letter. It may well serve to call to mind her tender phrases of the year IV, and, just as she did in her letters to Fréron, she scatters caressing Italian phrases in this letter to the new lover, aware that their promises are more suggestive in their languishing way than the words which she finds by trying to think of them.

[1] All three chambermaids.

" 9.30 *p.m.*

" I have been out ; the weather is charming ; a carriage road is being made. We went there. The breadth was enough for two four-horse carriages ; but I felt sad. Neither occupations nor amusements can take your place for an instant, not even in my recollections. Madame —— has fever, so that I am alone with the doctor and Isoard, who has come to stay here at my uncle's request ; he wrote to him. He is a good boy, but awfully stupid. I am making arrangements which will let you come to my bath and stop there all the time that I am there ; but Mme. Du . . . [Ducluzel] will be there too, likewise the gentlemen who are here, but don't let that frighten you ; it will only be the doctor and M. Isoard, and I have arranged it in that way entirely so that my dear one can come ; but I am afraid that the heat will make it uncomfortable for you. For myself, in spite of the other people there, I shall see no one but you. How pleasant will it be to be alone like that with you there. Though it cannot last for ever, yet we will never say good-bye, never ! If we are cautious we shall always be happy. I am impatiently waiting for news of your fever.

Tell me what you are doing. And bring what you need for painting, to make pretty things for me. My cottage is being set straight now. I am making flowers grow everywhere. I am having things made as nice as possible so that my dear one may find it comfortable. By the way, I forgot to tell you my husband has been appointed Gé . . . [Général]. He writes me charming letters full of affection ; where it all comes from I don't know. But I am going to stop because so much writing tires me. The waters are pulling me down rather. *Addio, caro, sempre caro amíco, amante caro, si ti amo ti amaro sempre ; carcado vení ma mando.* To-morrow I will write down how you are to manage here, I will give my very best attention to arrange things well. I am going to try to sleep, but I am always dreaming of you, especially lately. *Si ti amo di più, caro idolo mio. Ti mando dei fiori che sono stati nel mio sino, le ho coprati di baccí. Ti amo ci io sola.*"

For ten years she has been using all the resources of this kind of literature : she has not modernized nor varied the formulæ. The lovers, apparently, had always possessed the

same tendencies, had always belonged to the sentimental variety, on a par with the novel *Charles Barimore*, which Forbin published in 1810 in two octavo volumes. It was by no means the sentimental only that it impressed. "It dealt with the subject with charming lightness of touch," sighs Beugnot, "reminding me of Atalanta, who runs over flowers without leaving a trace of her footsteps upon them. I looked at it, and said to myself with bitter regret, 'Happy beings those who still abide in this beautiful phase of life in which it is permitted them to offer up votive offerings on such altars!'"[1]

It was likewise the Blangini phase; Blangini almost immediately succeeded Forbin in the favour of this capricious princess. He had, indeed, one advantage over the Count, for he had not been born till 1781, at Turin. Having taken refuge at Paris towards the close of the Directory, he worked at setting songs to music, of which a kind critic said that it was characterized by "smooth and sweet melody, and harmony light of touch and well arranged."[2]

[1] *Mémoires du Comte Beugnot*, p. 300.

[2] *Biographie des hommes vivants*; Paris, Sept., 1816, I. 362.

For the rest, he gave recitals at a little hall in the rue Basse-du-Rempart. There he gave first performances of his numerous compositions, which were sung as far away as Siberia—we have it on his own authority, though doubtless the tale lost nothing on that account. One of them (his own tale again) brought one of his publishers 20,000 francs.[1] Meanwhile the musician himself was running through the gamut of misery. Far from foolish, and most adaptable, he took to dedicating his songs to persons of high degree. To Caroline he proffered a set of nocturnes, nothing in it but music, it is true, but, he naïvely confesses, " nobody did anything for the princes and princesses of the Empire without receiving a reward immediately."[2] From Caroline he received a diamond pin, which seems to have gratified him inordinately. Destiny took him from Caroline to Pauline, who thenceforth became the beautiful Muse who inspired his music. " Perhaps it would have been better for my happiness had it gone no further ; but who can escape his fate ? "[3]

[1] *Souvenirs de F. Blangini*, pp. 62, 63.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 119.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 123.

Not Blangini, certainly. It naturally fell out that since Pauline "loved the Arts and Letters, and they found in her a powerful protectress,"[1] our musician was not long in experiencing all the forms of protection vouchsafed by the Imperial Venus. He resisted at first, being by nature a modest man. Thus, when the inspection of conscripts took place at the Hôtel de Ville at Paris he was quite overcome by the idea of having to strip. "I should not know how to describe the feeling of shame that came over me when I had to show myself to these gentlemen." The latter reformed him, however, and our Blangini gambolled about joyously almost as far as the street, forgetting to adjust his braces, which nearly involved the loss of his breeches.[2] In the end he grew less modest still, joining forces as he did with another of Pauline's lovers, his friend Maxime de Villemarest, with the object of turning an honest penny over his gay adventure. He apologized, it is true, explaining that his relations with her had given rise to too much scandal "in society,

[1] Félix Wouters, *Histoire de la famille Bonaparte*, p. 168.

[2] *Souvenirs de F. Blangini*, pp. 172, 173.

BLANGINI

for me to believe that I am bound to a reticence which would serve no purpose."[1]

1808 was his lucky year. He entered Pauline's household[2] as concert-master at a salary of 750 francs a month.[3] He had got his sister included, too, as a reader, but really for musical purposes. We do not dare to believe, however, that he carried a brother's love so far as to make her a partner in his duets with Pauline. Pauline

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 113.

[2] The following extract from the *Almanach impérial de* 1808, p. 80, shows the composition of Pauline's household at the time when Blangini entered it :—

SECTION IV

PRINCESSES' HOUSES

House of Mme. la princesse Pauline, duchesse de Guastalla.

M. le Cardinal Spina (O. ✠) Archbishop of Genoa	*High Almoner.*
M. l'abbé Saint-Geyrat M. l'abbé Maussac	*Chaplains.*
Mme. de Champagny	*Dame d'honneur.*
Mme. de Barral Mme. de Chambaudouin Mme. Louis de Bréhan Mme. ——[*sic*]	*Ladies-in-waiting.*
M. de Clermont-Tonnerre M. de Forbin	*Chamberlains.*
M. de Montbreton	*Equerry.*
M. du Pré Saint-Maur	*Private Secretary.*

[3] Frédéric Masson, *La Princesse Pauline* (1805–1809), *Revue de Paris*, Feb. 15, 1900, p. 814.

was fond of duets, Blangini assures us. On his arrival at Nice, in January, 1808, during the Princess's stay there, he was called upon to assist every day. "The Princess was so fond of singing and I of hearing her and of accompanying her that hours flew by as if they had been minutes; but all throats are not made of iron, and sometimes I lost my voice."[1] We know how lovers cure that species of loss. But Blangini overdid it. "Mme. la princesse Borghèse is receiving no one," wrote Mme. de Laplace to Elisa that same year, 1808; "she is suffering from nervous trouble which renders her state of health troublesome, though not dangerous."[2] Thanks to Blangini we know that her doors were sometimes shut for other reasons. Thus, one day at Nice the Princess's High Almoner asked to see Pauline. Labour lost! Cardinal Spina remained, Peri-like, outside a closed Paradise. "It is true that at the moment we had reached the climax of a duet."[3] In the end they occurred so often that the violinist got

[1] *Souvenirs de F. Blangini*, p. 143.

[2] *Lettres de Madame de Laplace à Elisa Napoléon, Princesse de Lucques et de Piombino, réunies et annotées par Paul Marmottan;* Paris, 1897, p. 140.

[3] *Souvenirs de F. Blangini*, p. 143.

unstrung. Pauline commandeered him to continual attendance, forbade him to dine in the town, kept a watch over him, overworked him. "If my slavery was a pleasant one," sighs Blangini, "I was none the less a slave."[1] Pauline's demands on him went farther still. Despite the musician's reluctance, she took him for public promenades in her carriage, a fine carriage with panels proudly parading the imperial arms. Blangini took fright. Supposing the Emperor got to know? And, in anticipation, he pondered on the fate that was then awaiting a less fortunate lover, M. de Canouville. "I was not at all anxious to receive promotion in the shape of a subaltern's commission and be ordered off to sing my nocturnes in Spain, to an *obbligato* accompaniment of bombs and bullets."[2] Blangini a subaltern! The violinist is laughing at us! His turn of mind was of a more peaceful kind. But on the heels of fear of the Emperor comes fear of the husband.

Prince Borghèse was, in fact, about to rejoin his wife. Having been nominated Governor-

[1] *Ibid.*

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 144, 145.

General of the Departments-beyond-the-Alps by a decree of the Senate of February 2, 1808, a post which had been raised to the status of "Grand Dignity" of the Empire, Borghèse started for Paris on the following April 4. Some days later he reached Nice, and the married couple took the road to Turin, where they arrived on April 22, with Blangini in tow, a lean, sore, whiny Blangini, testing all the tones of the chromatic scale with the modulations of his grief. Now that he was forced to abandon the Princess to her husband, he regretted her bitterly. He no longer found any opportunity for making an appointment with her, of seeing her again at a lover's meeting. Summoned to Jérôme's court in Westphalia, the new king's subterfuges went far towards consoling him. The Empire having fallen, in 1816, he married. Shortly afterwards a letter from Pauline summoned him to Italy, probably to his former occupations. But—— Fallen princesses, what place have they in a musician's clientèle? To Italy, too! And "the proprieties"? It was a trifle late for him to think about the proprieties. Moreover, his fame was at its zenith. *La Lyre des Dames* which he compiled, won for

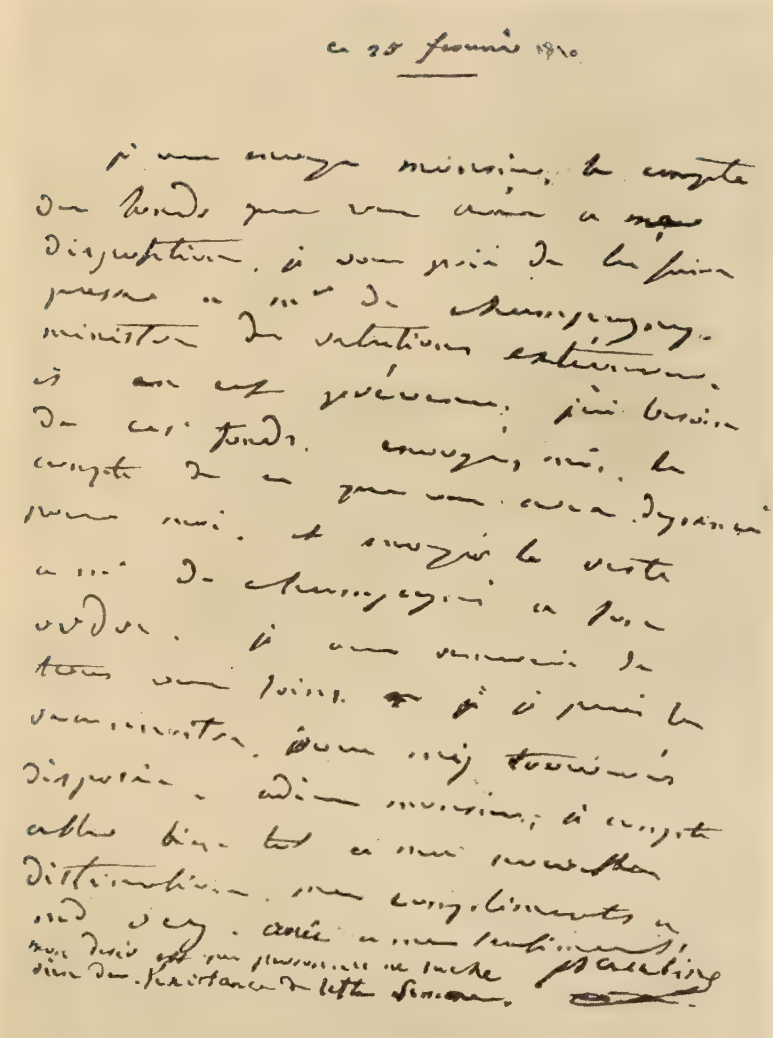
him the most flattering success, success[1] that he enjoyed to the end of his career, which terminated in 1841. He had become the *Chevalier* Félix de Blangini—nothing higher.

[1] The *Bibliothèque Nationale* possesses the following items of his work: *L'Anneau de la Fiancée,* lyric drama in three acts, by MM. Brisset and Blangini, performed for the first time at the *Théâtre des Nouveautés,* Jan. 28, 1828; Paris, 1828; and *Figaro, ou le Jour des Noces;* play in three acts, after Beaumarchais, Mozart, and Rossini, arranged by MM. Dartois and Blangini, performed for the first time at the *Théâtre des Nouveautés,* Aug. 16, 1827; Paris, 1827.

CHAPTER III

THE SYBARITIC PRINCESS

BETWEEN two liaisons, however, the Princess incessantly complains, and bewails her state. Her disease, whether imaginary or otherwise, provides her with plenty of excuses for abandoning herself to the despair which she wears like a new dress. Compelled to put herself in doctors' hands, to listen to their advice, and to let them experiment on her with their remedies, she does nothing but wander from town to town, sampling the waters here, taking the baths there, yet a rebellious patient, in revolt against finality in the medicine-mongers' efforts, and for ever in carriages, in litters, in sedan-chairs—on the road in search of a cure. When the imperial will condemns her to go and play her part at Turin in Borghèse's province, she has but one aim : to escape at the earliest moment, to allege new crises, to act the part of a victim overwhelmed by a fresh



AUTOGRAPH LETTER OF PAULINE BONAPARTE

attack of the malady, in order to regain, as she wrote to Murat, "that dear France on which one's thoughts dwell in spite of oneself."[1] We know that it was not merely the beauty of the French landscape that attracted her. Nor was

[1] Princess Pauline to Murat, in command at Paris; Rome, Feb. 29, year XII, pp. 1, 4to. Letter sold at the Lalande sale for fcs. 18.50 (No. 110) in 1844. *Manuel de l'amateur d'autographes*, letter B. *L'amateur d'autographes*, March 16, 1863, p. 94. The letter has since been published in full by Baron Albert Lumbroso, in his *Miscellanea Napoleonica;* Rome, 1898, V, p. lxxiii; it runs as follows: "I have received your letter, my dear Murat. It was time it arrived. I accused you some time ago of being very quick to forget your little sister, and I find it very comforting to know I was wrong. You really are settled at Paris? I do hope that that event is giving you all the happiness that you deserve, what with your goodness and your devotion to my brother. You have said good-bye, then, to beautiful Italy? I too should like to leave it for a while to see all my relations again and that dear France on which one's thoughts dwell in spite of oneself! I don't know, but I think that the air of Rome does not suit me very well. I am always catching colds. My little Camille has just been obliged to journey to Naples on unavoidable business; he has given me thousands of messages for you. When he comes back he will answer your nice letter. I am delighted to find that kind Caroline does not forget her sister. Please give her an affectionate kiss on my account. I have received a letter from her, too. I hope that we shall all meet again in France soon, all together, and happy, and congratulating ourselves on things in general. Good-bye, my dear Murat, a thousand kisses for your little children. A kiss for my dear Caroline likewise, and I beg you both to be assured of my fond love. Take care not to forget your sister.—BONAPARTE-BORGHÈSE.—A thousand remembrances, please, to all my relations."

Napoleon misinformed on that point, either; for which reason it sometimes happened that he was opposed to the Princess's journeyings. In December, 1807, for instance, he makes use of the badness of Italian roads as a pretext to oblige her to wait at Nice.[1] Moreover, had not Pauline drawn on all the resources of her acute and feline diplomacy to get as far as she had done? The whole faculty, she said, prescribed her stay at Nice. Not long after Cambacérès undeceived the Emperor. "Had I received your letter earlier I certainly should not have authorized it," answered Napoleon.[2] He compelled her therefore to stop at Nice. But why should we be surprised to find the brother sceptical, from this time onward, concerning his sister's illnesses? In the island of Elba "the Emperor often took pleasure in saying that 'her illnesses were imagination.'"[3] And had he not

[1] The Emperor to Princess Pauline Borghèse, Milan, Dec. 20, 1807. *Archives nationales, série AF* IV., *carton* 874. Léon Lecestre, *Lettres inédites de Napoléon Ier*, I. 130, No. 206.

[2] The Emperor to Prince Cambacérès, Arch-Chancellor of the Empire, Finkenstein, May 16, 1807. *Archives nationales, série AF* IV., *carton* 873. Léon Lecestre, *Lettres inédites de Napoléon Ier*, I. 97, No. 154.

[3] Pons (de l'Hérault), *Souvenirs et anecdotes de l'île d'Elbe*, p. 242.

written, as early as 1808, with good-natured irony, "I regret to learn that your health is bad. I suppose you are being sensible, and that it is not your own doing?"[1] What happened was that certain rumours had reached him from Nice concerning Blangini's occupations and his variety of chamber-music.

And, in truth, it was a curious life that went on at M. Vinaille's villa facing the sea, where the Princess had taken up her quarters with her household. Its personnel took the greatest liberties and indulged in the most extraordinary etiquette. Not one of them but combined the most diverse duties. Thus Pauline's physician-in-ordinary, Doctor Peyre, who also passed for one of her lovers,[2] undertook, in addition to his medical functions, those of steward to the Household.[3] He was a kind of *maître Jacques*, standing fiercely on guard in front of the cash-box. The cook likewise played more than one part; he let the joints burn, but he played the guitar.[4]

[1] The Emperor to Princess Pauline Borghèse, Bayonne, May 26, 1808. *Archives nationales, série AF* IV., *carton* 876. Léon Lecestre, *Lettres inédites de Napoléon I^er^*, I. 197, No. 284.

[2] *Mémoires de Barras*, IV. 192.

[3] *Souvenirs de F. Blangini*, p. 134. [4] *Ibid.*, p. 139.

Here we gain a glimpse of the distractions of Pauline's idle existence. Around her, extravagance on the part of the under-servants was rampant; higher up, "kleptomaniac" ladies-in-waiting; general systematic exploitation of her acquiescent indolence. It was unusual for her to rouse herself. "It has been stated that she was spiteful, and this rumour has even been spread by persons of her own household," writes the Duchesse d'Abrantès.[1] This rumour could only have come from a chambermaid who, at Elba, received a smack from the Princess on account of her clumsiness. And even then she begged her pardon directly afterwards.[2] Pauline remained the capricious, impetuous, creature, always liable to sudden outbursts, to affectionate liberality, or the childish avarice of her young days, who consulted fortune-tellers on the success of her amorous intrigues,[3] swore undying love to Fréron, and, the next day, married Leclerc. She issued regulations about the amount of sugar in her household's coffee, and arranged for a daily supply of news by

[1] *Mémoires de Madame la duchesse d'Abrantès*, I. 386.

[2] Pons (de l'Hérault), *Souvenirs et anecdotes de l'île d'Elbe*, p. 242.

[3] Général de Ricard, *Auteur des Bonaparte*, p. 144.

courier as to the latest Parisian fashions. "Had I known that," said the Emperor at St. Helena, "it would not have lasted long; she would have had a thorough good scolding. But there it is, when you are Emperor, you never find out these things."[1] Yet he was not quite so ignorant as he made out. Had he forgotten that, as early as 1806, he had notified Fesch of Pauline's "unfortunate habits"?—"those unfortunate habits which good taste checks even in the most frivolous circles of the metropolis."[2] And what of the thousand other details of Pauline's private life—did nothing ever reach Napoleon's ears? Did Hallé, to whose edifying diagnosis we have already referred, who was still attending her in 1808,[3] never say anything, and go on incurring a responsibility of the consequences of which he was fully aware? This is barely credible, the more so, inasmuch as Caroline, not to mention others, had made an excellent guess at the causes

[1] Comte de Las Cases, *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*, II. p. 32.

[2] The Emperor to Cardinal Fesch, Paris, April 10, 1806. *Correspondance de Napoléon Ier*, IX. 321, No. 7678.

[3] Letter from Mme. Laplace to Elisa, Paris, Aug. 5, 1808. Paul Marmottan, *Lettres de Madame de Laplace à Elisa Napoléon*, p. 142.

of the state Pauline was in. She was doubtless informed of her sister's stratagems, in concert with Forbin, to deceive the doctors, but she understood that no improvement was to be looked for, since the Princess Borghèse had acquired a habit of disdaining the advice of her husband, her relations, her friends, her most devoted attendants. "What are we to do, then?" the Queen of Naples asked Lucien. "What are we to do? Love her and leave her alone as she is, and not oppose her or worry her with useless advice, since she has made up her mind not to follow it." And she goes on to allude to other reasons still, hesitating to write them, but reserving them to speak to Lucien about at their forthcoming interview.[1] What these motives were we may make a shrewd guess; they were concerned with her lovers. Deprivation of those was a remedy to which Pauline would never submit.

So she continued to wander about to watering-places with that strange retinue and that series of lovers, some of whose portraits we have

[1] Autograph signed letter from Caroline to Lucien, July 30. . . ., pp. 1, 4to. *Catalogue d'une précieuse collection de lettres autographes concernant Napoléon Ier, sa famille, ses maréchaux, ses généraux, et ses ministres;* Paris, May, 1894, No. 66.

already sketched. It was in the course of one of these journeys, that to Gréoulx, that Barras met her, in the following extraordinary circumstances. It is a curious picture he has left in outline in his Memoirs; let it serve to illustrate Pauline's neurotic ramblings through France considered as a collection of bathing-resorts.

"The Princess was going to take the waters at Gréoulx; she accepted the kind offers of her bathing-master, M. Gravier, proprietor of the baths. Passing by Aulps on her way to Nice, Her Highness became really very ill. Being in the state of health that she was, she had to be carried in men's arms. She halted on some rising ground, in a meadow, near an estate belonging to M. César Roubaud, at whose house she was to spend the night. Some courtly gentlemen respectfully undressed in order to lay their clothes on the grass, so that the Princess might sit down without risking anything through the dampness of the ground. M. Desbains, sub-prefect of Grasse, with hair *à l'oiseau royal*, offered his back to support the Princess's, while General Guyot lay down at right angles and placed the Princess's two feet

on his stomach, the three forming a grotesque group which highly amused passers-by and idlers. Roubaud had prepared a magnificent dinner; the thrushes which the Princess loved had been procured regardless of cost. Dinner was served, and the guests took their places; it was only those of the greatest importance who were admitted. Roubaud, who was giving the dinner, made his appearance to do the honours; a chamberlain turned him away, saying, 'The Princess has not invited you at all,' and the host was not received at his own table."

Barras goes on to make his readers' mouth water with:—

"The itinerary of the journeys of this incredible establishment would be extremely curious."[1]

The tale of Pauline's own, indeed, would possess a rare piquancy. Nevertheless, we cannot contemplate the idea of making this the place for collecting the scattered anecdotes. M. Frédéric Masson has briefly dwelt on them with a light hand; and to set them forth in order would add nothing to our knowledge of

[1] *Mémoires de Barras*, IV. pp. 191, 192.

Pauline's private life. Moreover, some other characteristics of hers remain to be reviewed which are of greater assistance to us in defining her psychology, and in forming an idea of her hysterical neuroticism—her willingness to receive men when she was taking her baths, for one. We have found her writing to Forbin, " I am making arrangements which will let you come to my bath and stop there all the time that I am there," which confirms Blangini's account of her holding a reception when in her bath.[1] She had herself carried to her milk-baths (which cost 10 francs each)[2] by a negro in her service, Paul[3] by name, or Rode,[4] it is not clear which. This means of conveyance, it seems, caused gossip, for, to put a stop to malicious tittle-tattle, Pauline married her negro off to one of her chambermaids, thinking that, after that, nothing remained for scandal to say about her nigger's duties, which gives a good idea of her logic.

[1] *Souvenirs de F. Blangini*, p. 167.

[2] Frédéric Masson, *La Princesse Pauline* (1805–1809), *Revue de Paris*, Feb. 15, 1900, p. 800.

[3] Gilbert Stenger, *La société française pendant le Consulat*, 3rd series, p. 148.

[4] Frédéric Masson, *La Princesse Pauline* (1805–1809), *Revue de Paris*, Feb. 15, 1900, p. 801.

Women's praise, too, was a thing that she did not despise. Says Fouché: "She loved magnificence, dissipation, and every variety of homage."[1] That was why, when her toilet was in progress, she condescended to promenade naked before her women-attendants. Yet never, to our knowledge, have any scandalous anecdotes of the Lesbian type been current about her. Her motive, then, must have been that of the most naïve and child-like vanity. Nevertheless, according to Constant in his Memoirs, "concerning her toilet details are told that seem incredible." These details Constant passes over in modest silence, but some trifles have reached our knowledge all the same, thanks to a woman, the Baronne du Montet. Her budget of picturesque souvenirs includes a little sketch of Pauline at her toilet which may be hung in this gallery of pen-portraits. It is more than a bust, and truth to nature obliges us to present it with the others. Once again is light thrown on Pauline's psychology, as we read through the plain statement of fact which Mme. du Montet entitles :—

[1] *Mémoires de Joseph Fouché, duc d'Otrante*, II. 43.

" *Un tableau de genre.*

" You are well aware that our reminiscences fall like leaves of spring, summer, or autumn. Some come from the heart, some from I know not where. The imagination has no system ; thus, I am thinking, I know not why, of the beautiful Princess Pauline Borghèse, Napoleon's sister. Our dear Wilhelmina Hœhenegg, lady-in-waiting to the Empress [of Austria] was telling us one evening how, when at Rome with Princess Ruspoli who had given her a home after the death of her mother, the conversation turned on pretty feminine feet. Princess Ruspoli knew how frivolously vain the Imperial princess was, and did not forget to go into raptures over her foot. ' Would you like to see it ? ' said Princess Borghèse quietly. ' Come to-morrow at twelve.' Great was Princess Ruspoli's astonishment, but there was no means of escaping this peculiar invitation. She presented herself at the Palazzo Borghèse with Mme. de Hœhenegg, and was ushered into an exquisite boudoir. The Princess was reclining at her ease in an invalid's chair, her little feet well in view ; but that was not the treat in store. A page, pretty as a Cupid, and dressed as pages are in

mediæval pictures, entered, bearing a costly ewer, a silver-gilt basin, a napkin of fine cambric, perfumes, and other cosmetics. He drew a velvet hassock up to the chair, the Princess graciously put forth one of her legs, the little page took off the stocking, the garter, too, I think, and began to massage, to rub, to wipe, to perfume this beautiful foot, which really was incomparable.[1] The operation was a

[1] The page's name is not given by the Baronne du Montet, and it would seem that no document can furnish it. By way of a clue, however, here follows Prince Borghèse's *Maison des Pages* as it appears in the *Almanach impérial* for 1813, the last in which it figures :—

MAISON DES PAGES DE S.M. (*sic*)

M. le baron Provana del Sabbione, *Chamberlain and head-master.*

M. le capitaine Merlin, *Superintendent and instructor in behaviour.*

Teachers.

MM.		MM.	
Bidone	Mathematics	Merlin	Drawing and Fortification.
Deperret	History and Geography	Guaretti	Fencing.
Marenco	Latin and French	Savant	Writing.

Pages.

MM.	MM.
Caissotti de Chiusano	Coardi de Carpenetto.
Armand de Gros.	Galliani d'Agliano.
Bruco de Sordevalo.	Berton de Sambuy.
De la Chiesa de Cinsan.	Nomis de Pollon.
Ferrero de la Marmora.	Giustiniani.

lengthy one, and the astonishment of the lookers-on so great that they lost the faculty of enthusiastic praise which was doubtless expected of them. I told Mme. Hœhenegg that that would be a pretty subject for a *genre* picture ; she was delightfully gifted in that way. We laughingly reproached her for having neglected a completely new subject. While the little page drew off, and drew on, her stockings, perfumed her beautiful feet, filed and refined the nails, she was chatting and, to all appearances, quite devoid of self-consciousness as regards her toilet."[1]

Was it not that same lack of self-consciousness, of the moral sense, which induced her to grant the sculptor Canova those famous, much-discussed sittings for the Venus which has immortalized both artist and model? "The audacious caprice which led Pauline to pose in the sculptor's studio in this far from chaste, albeit highly classical, fashion, is an all-sufficing clue to her character," is the comment of a fair judge.[2] Her only pre-occupation, in fact, on

[1] *Souvenirs de la Baronne du Montet* (1785–1866) ; Paris, 1904, pp. 400, 401.

[2] Arthur Lévy, *Napoléon intime*, p. 308.

that occasion, was concerning herself ; Canova, " with more to recommend him in the way of talents than of character,"[1] is relegated to the background. This sculptor, who first came into notice by modelling a lion out of a lump of butter at the table of the lord of the manor, has not struck the pamphleteers as objectionable ; he has not been accused of abusing the " altogether " which his Imperial model conceded him.[2] Was the idea of this statue his own ? It seems rather to have been Pauline's. Did she not have before her, by way of a stimulant, the gallery of the Palazzo Borghèse, filled with Venuses of all sizes and all varieties of beauty ? " It was a charming idea to reserve a whole

[1] *Le livre noir de Messieurs Delavau et Franchet, ou répertoire alphabétique de la police politique sous le ministère déplorable ; ouvrage imprimé d'après les registres de l'administration, avec un table générale des noms,* with an introduction by M. Année ; Paris, 1829, III. 18, 19.

[2] Comte d'Hérisson, *Le cabinet noir,* p. 131. Henri de Latouche assures us, however, that Pauline only sat for the head of Canova's statue : Cf. the notice in *l'Œuvre de Canova, recueil de gravures d'après ses statues et ses bas-reliefs, exécuté par M. Réveil, accompagné d'un texte explicatif de chacune des ses compositions et d'un essai sur sa vie et ses ouvrages,* by H. de Latouche, Paris, 1825. The statue of Pauline was engraved for the first time in *Opere di Scultúra e di plastica di Antonio Canova, descritte da Isabella Albrizzi nata Teotochi ;* Pisa, 1821, Vol. I, facing p. 7. [Cf. also Malamini's new (1911) *Life of Canova.*]

room to Venus alone," says Kotzebue, who had the opportunity of paying it a visit, "it is pleasant to see and compare the various conceptions that so many celebrated painters have formed of beauty. For instance, there are two of them, one by Rubens, who would have found it difficult to get a place as governess in a bishop's household."[1] The probability is, therefore, that it had occurred to Pauline to have executed a pendant to the Venus de' Medici; what we know of her innate vanity leaves us but little room for doubt on that point. Besides, could not her beauty stand the comparison well? Canova made the attempt. We know his work. In it he reached the highest point of his art, combining grace with dignity, and elegance with robustness. The statue which he carved out of the marble is worthy of a tomb or a triumphal arch. It was finished by 1805, for, in a letter of February 19, Artand, secretary to the minister Cacault, mentions it among the completed works in Canova's studio.

"No. 7, Her Imperial Highness, Mme. la

[1] Kotzebue, *Souvenirs d'un voyage en Livonie, à Rome, et à Naples, faisant suite aux souvenirs de Paris;* Paris, 1806, IV. 137.

princesse Borghèse, almost naked, reclining on an antique couch." [1]

It appealed to Borghèse's taste only to a moderate degree. He shared Kotzebue's opinion —" I should not like to expose my wife to the public gaze in this way "—and acted on it. He put the indecent statue under lock and key in a private apartment, and a special authorization was necessary to those students who wished to admire it. The lyrical Beugnot was very wide of the mark when he exclaimed, " I wish that Canova had been commissioned to execute a statue of her, and that, once completed by his admirable chisel, it should have been reproduced in a thousand different places that it might take the place for modern times of the recognized model which antiquity found in the Florentine Venus."[2] It is clear that Borghèse in no wise favoured this flattering multiplication. After his death in 1832 it was supposed that the statue passed to London.[3] Nothing of the kind hap-

[1] Quoted by Lieutenant-Colonel Th. Jung, *Lucien Bonaparte et ses mémoires*, III. p. 58.

[2] *Mémoires du Comte Beugnot*, p. 300.

[3] " The statue belongs to-day to the King of England," (Rabbe, Vieilh de Boisjolin, and Sainte-Preuve, *Biographie universelle et portative des contemporains;* Paris, 1834, I. 763.)

pened. It still adorns the Villa Borghèse, perpetuating, amid the damp silence of that necropolis of marbles, the imperial beauty of her who personified in that age, and will continue to do so through the eternity of harmony and of the fitness of things, Venus in France.

CHAPTER IV

A HITHERTO UNKNOWN LIAISON OF PAULINE'S [1]

IN 1812 we find Pauline with four lovers! Lieutenant de Brack, a brilliant soldier, who seems to have been well fitted to become an intimate acquaintance of the Princess's without any waste of time;[2] Com-

[1] Talma's letters to Pauline Bonaparte, which are drawn on in this chapter, are all unpublished, and come from the Lebrun collection in the Bibliothèque Mazarine. We shall not indicate the source of each quotation, but refer the reader to *Lettres inédites de Talma à la Princesse Pauline Bonaparte;* Fasquelle, 1911. All other sources of our evidence are indicated.

[2] It was to this de Brack, by that time a colonel, that Queen Hortense addressed the following curious letter, in 1832, concerning the Duke of Reichstadt's death: "MY DEAR FRIENDS—I am answering without delay the letter which I received from you. I am feeling very keenly the grief which you share. Some fatal influence seems to cling to the name I bear, and we must apparently pay for the glories of the past with the loss of what constitutes our present glory and our happiness. This son of the Emperor, so worthy of him, has only been made to pass away from our earth. Everybody agrees in saying that he was the most distinguished young man to be met with; though brought up in strict seclusion, he matured rapidly, and adopted a military career with passionate enthusiasm as soon as he was allowed to choose.

QUEEN HORTENSE
From an engraving by Pauquet

mander Duchand, whom we shall meet again about 1814; Canouville, who is far away amidst the snows of Russia; and, lastly, Talma. Such is the lovers' four-in-hand that she sets herself to drive; God knows how and with what attention at awkward moments! Each one of the favourites is, of course, to believe he is the only one of his kind. For the time being three were at Aix, whither, from Lyons, the never-cured invalid has come early in June.

Three of these liaisons became known. Nobody has ever suspected the fourth, the hero of which was the tragedian Talma. And now, suddenly, we come upon a dusty bundle which has lain forgotten in a garret, from which falls a packet of letters which enlightens us as to this new adventure of Pauline's. To tell the

He wished to pass through all ranks, wore himself out as a commanding officer, and his chest was attacked almost before anyone thought of his being ill. May France, at any rate, regain once more her strength and her tranquillity; he did not repine at the thought of probably having to pass his life far from her, especially if that life would only have served as a source of unrest. My son has been deeply distressed; I am expecting my cousin. Yes, a settled gloom will ever surround us. May God guard us against further misfortunes and still leave us, as all our happiness, a quiet life and the sympathy of our friends. I embrace my dear Stéphanie and assure both of you of my affectionate remembrance.—HORTENSE." (*Carnet historique et littéraire*, III. (1899), pp. 336, 337.

truth, some contemporaries had guessed as much; some, indeed, knew, and knew full details; but they were discreet. Talma's wife,[1] in a book about her husband, is the only one to drop a hint concerning the romance which to-day is placed beyond doubt. "Talma became a lucky man all of a sudden," she writes. "Being pursued by women of the highest position, challenged by them, in fact, the idea occurred to him of achieving celebrity in this direction, damaging as that is to domestic happiness."[2] Furthermore, a letter from Talma himself, addressed to his brother-in-law Ducis, allows us to guess what gossip was saying at Paris concerning his liaison with Princess Bor-

[1] The tragedian had married a second wife, Charlotte Vanhove, who married Petit in 1786, and, after Talma's death, the Comte de Châlot, in 1828. She was born at the Hague, Sept. 10, 1771, made her first appearance at the *Comédie-Française*, Oct. 8, 1785, was admitted to membership on Nov. 28 following, and was pensioned off April 1, 1811. Dying at Paris, April 11, 1860, she was buried in the Montparnasse cemetery. Georges Monval, *Liste alphabétique des sociétaires*, p. 113.

[2] *Etudes sur l'art théâtral, suivies d'anecdotes inédites sur Talma et la correspondance de Ducis avec cet artiste depuis* 1792 *jusqu'au* 1815, by Mme. Veuve Talma, *née* Vanhove, now Comtesse de Châlot; Paris, 1836, pp. 299, 300. See also Alfred Copin, *Etudes dramatiques, Talma et l'Empire*, 2nd edition; Paris, 1888, p. 230.

ghèse. Writing from Lyons, August 2, 1812, he enquires, "What are people saying at Paris? Any scandal-mongering? For myself, I don't suppose anybody is making any remarks, and I expect that the absence from Paris of the two persons, one in one direction, one in another (nominally), will have caused all comment to cease. My wife has been writing to me on the subject, and makes out that it is still being discussed, but that I don't believe." What we may be sure of is this: that any such comment ran a very quiet course, inasmuch as none of it crops up in memoirs or private correspondence known to us.

At this period Talma was by no means a conquest to be ashamed of. If Pauline could have owned to having a lover, he would have been the one. He had by now reached the zenith of his great reputation as a tragedian, victor in the struggles which he had had to wage against his comrades at the Comédie in days gone by, at the dawn of the Revolution. Of the Rue de Richelieu company he is the greatest, the noblest, crowned with the crown of laurel which the brilliance of his genius had earned him. He then personified the splendour

of French tragic art, the victory of live, passionate tragedy over the dismal, pompous, icy spectacles of the dead past. He was the incarnation of the heroes—and of the hero, the ideal, noble, hero of the tragedy as Corneille understood it, the tragedy that the Emperor loved and welcomed. Thus appreciated by the brother, what difficulty is there in imagining him appreciated more keenly still by the sister, considering the universality of his expressiveness, gesture, movement, accents speaking to eye, heart, and senses ? Is it not so that we can explain Pauline's passion ?—and the shortness of its duration, too ? for, the " boards " once left behind, the purple falls from the shoulders, the laurel from the forehead ; Talma becomes—Talma ; no more a lover—as other lovers are, the others who come, and love, and go. Beyond doubt, it was the magic of his genius alone that conquered Pauline. That spell broken, all was over. The circumstances and the incidents of the liaison supply all-sufficient evidence of this. We have but to set them forth.

Under pretext of taking the waters the tragedian arrived at Aix, but, he confesses to his brother-in-law, they " have done me a great

deal of harm." According to the Duchesse d'Abrantès he had only come to "drink hot water and improve his health." For visiting Pauline he had a good excuse—that of taking the invalid out of herself by reading Molière to her, the "*Malade imaginaire,*" perhaps.[1] Mme. d'Abrantès was a guest at these little gatherings, or, at any rate, at some of them. In her Memoirs she laughs at Talma on account of the efforts he made to work himself down to his subject. "The poor man got out of his depth a little; or rather more than a little." Before Mme. d'Abrantès wrote about it she probably took a malicious pleasure in holding forth on the subject in the society of the queens and princesses at Aix. Pauline got wind of this, and bewailed it by letter to Talma. From her epistle to Forbin we can gauge the kind of missive that the subject would occasion. "My friend," is the lover's sympathetic reply, "what you tell me of that duchess grieves and annoys me! These are things that I did not dream of; I did not dream that all who came near you, all who knew you, had any thought of you but loving ones! Oh! what a soul is that which

[1] Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon et sa famille*, VII. 376, 377.

remains insensible to your sufferings, to your sweetness, to your goodness ! " Talma, we see, was in complete agreement with that candid historian who, with blindfold generosity, conceded Pauline " all the virtues that we love to discover in women."[1] It remains to be ascertained if fickleness enters into the category, fairly comprehensive though it be, of feminine virtues. Really, we cannot help being astonished at the suddenness with which Pauline has passed from de Canouville to Duchand, from Duchand to de Brack, to fall on the neck of the bewitched, dumbfounded Talma. M. Frédéric Masson, in his ignorance, has written that for the moment " her occupations were quite respectable," and that, among them, " her health was the chief." The correspondence with Talma shows that, as in Forbin's case, some compromise was arrived at in matters of health. " No one has been received," he writes to Ducis, " save one person only, and that in such a way that no one has been let into the secret. I tell you this for yourself alone ; there is no need for me to remind you of all the unfortunate consequences which would ensue if anyone

[1] F. Wouters, *Histoire de la famille Bonaparte*, p. 178.

knew of it." Ducis will keep quiet ; no one will know anything. But Talma, at least, will inform us, in a letter to Pauline, that the Chevaley mansion, where she is staying, "is not to be approached by me"—except at night. For the rest, all would have remained a mystery to us had not Talma, at intervals in his impassioned correspondence, marshalled his reminiscences of his amours. Who would have said that as late as this Pauline was still lavish with oaths on the head of little Dermide, Leclerc's child, who was at rest far away beneath Tuscany yews? To her promises she had added the gift of some ringlets of her hair. Talma put them in one of her handkerchiefs and carried the keepsake next his heart. Who would have guessed that, if he had not reminded his mistress of it at the hour of the final parting, when she was far away and lost to him ?

It was nearly three months that this liaison lasted at Aix between the Imperial Princess and him who at this period remained the last hope of the tragedy to which his genius had imparted fresh life.

On September 13 he leaves, to begin the series of performances which he was under contract

to give. His first halt was at Geneva. There he arrived in the depths of despair, and overwhelmed by burning memories. "On getting out of the carriage I found a crowd of people waiting to see me. These tributes of the curiosity and of the esteem of the public of which I once was so proud hardly move me now, and if they still retain any value in my eyes it is merely that they may serve to render me more worthy of your affection." That very day a brisk correspondence springs up between the two lovers. Talma's letters are addressed to "Mlle. Sophie," poste-restante, Aix, and it will be Ferrand, Pauline's major-domo, who will go to enquire for them. What a degree of carefulness does Talma bring into play in his correspondence! He drafts one rough copy after another; of one letter, dated October 25, 1812, from Lyons, there are four! He polishes his phrases, dovetails them with scrupulous care, takes thought for the turn of the phrase, the niceties of wording, that they may make their mark, may strike the imagination, may make "the tears flow from his dear one's eyes."

He succeeded in this at times, if we may believe Pauline. But we know that harmless

little knaveries do occur in such connexions, which will never bind the unbound. What the tragedian seems to have especially at heart in this affair is not to lose touch with Pauline. "Link me with your existence in every possible way," he writes to her. "You have promised me that." Verily, verily, Pauline was not stingy with promises! But she was reckoning without Talma's excellent memory, as we shall discover later on. For the moment he is intent on maintaining the relations which they entered into at Aix; moreover, he seems deeply smitten. He offers to carry out all commissions that shall be entrusted to him. The Princess requires watches, it appears. The courier brings prompt and most disinterested offers of his services: "I have seen some very good ones set with fine pearls and enamels for seven louis; really very cheap." And then the invalid is probably at a loss what to do; what shall he send her? Books? He has hardly any, barring theatrical pamphlets, and not many of those. He will send those. "I have sent you by the courier the books which Ferrand asked for on your behalf." Perhaps that is why Pauline's library included a considerable number

of dramatic works.[1] But Talma was thinking of consolations for himself likewise. At a dinner to which he was invited at Geneva he resumed his acquaintance with Dr. Buttini, who, not long before, had been in attendance on Pauline.[2]

[1] "This library, long ago dispersed, is that of Napoleon's favourite sister, Princess Pauline Bonaparte; we have before us the manuscript catalogue. It is a volume of thirty-seven pages containing 250 entries. The writing is pretty enough, but that is certainly its only merit; for the compiler, whether male, or, which is more probable, female, may have been very charming, but his or her strong point was not bibliography, nor literature, nor even orthography. He or she had adopted a sort of rudimentary alphabetical order, basing it on the simple principle of taking the initial letters of the titles on the backs of the books, classing, with child-like simplicity, all those entitled 'Œuvres' under 'O' without distinction and without taking into account either variety of subject or authors' names. Hence a confusion in which discords abound, and also some very quaint juxtapositions. Under the letter V, for instance, side by side with *Vie de Xénophon* (the Cyropædeia ?) and the *Vies de Cornélius Népos* occurs the *Vie de . . . Faublas!* The beautiful owner of this collection was not exactly strait-laced, if we may judge of her by certain well-known anecdotes, such as that of her posing to Canova. Nevertheless we ought to say that Louvel's novel, *Les liaisons dangéreuses*, and *Jacques le fataliste*, are the only books of that description which figure, in isolation, in that library, which is, as a whole, astoundingly serious, as we shall see. . . . The Princess's predilection for plays is obvious. Not only did she possess the majority of first-rate and second-rate dramatic works by French writers, but also Shakespeare and Le Tourneur." (Baron Ernouf, *Excursion rétrospective dans une bibliothéque inconnue; Bulletin du Bibliophile et du Bibliothécaire;* Paris, 1882, pp. 466, 470.)

[2] Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon et sa famille*, VII. 375.

Talma monopolized him, for, "I could talk about you to him." Now and then some light clouds cast shadows over the height of his passion. Why does Pauline no longer treat him with that friendly freedom which used to give him so much pleasure but a few days ago? "My dear friend, for goodness' sake, don't always say 'vous.' Let your hand write the 'tu' which your mouth has so often spoken to me." His lady-love had some excuse; at Aix had just arrived the news of Canouville's death, of the terrible and glorious end of the elegant and beloved lover, perhaps the most ardently beloved of all. If she has any desire at all to hear—and what curiosity could be more legitimate?—Pauline can learn how he died on the banks of the Moskowa; what piteous, terrifying remains they were that they threw on the ambulance straw. No consolation, no mitigation, could have been the lot of that bloody agony. There lies the corpse in a strange land, amid the bones of his enemies. For ever, for ever, and for ever, all is finished for that fascinating, fair-haired phantom lover. At least she will weep for him? An hour or a day? We know now. Let us note the dates. It was on September 27

that de Canouville's death became known at Aix.[1] From Aix to Geneva is a day's journey for couriers. On the morning of September 29, or the evening of the 28th, Pauline wrote to Talma, a "charming, tender letter" for which the tragedian thanks her effusively. "Oh, my dear one!" he cries, "what horrible anxiety have you dispelled; all day yesterday I was beside myself, and then—your letter arrived at 8 p.m. My dear one, how your charming, tender letter touched me to the heart! Yes, my dear one, yes, I shall obey you; yes, I respect the weakness and the sufferings that you are still experiencing. It is a horrible sacrifice that I make for you, but it is enough for me that such is your will—I submit uncomplainingly to the frightful torment that you inflict on me. I leave in an hour's time, Pauline. I turn my last look towards you, accept my 'farewell'; as I say it my eyes fill with tears. I can scarcely write . . ."

What is it she has asked of Talma? to give herself up, for some days at any rate, to the grief which has entered into her life? Not to write to her any more? to wait? Hardly;

[1] *Ibid.*, VII. 381.

seeing that on October 2 a further letter from the tragedian leaves Lyons addressed to "Mlle. Sophie, 'poste-restante.'" If her tears had been shed for Canouville, they soon dried. The next day but one, in fact, after the tragic news arrived, she wrote to Talma, whom, later, when she has grown decidedly tired of him, she will leave without news of her for several months together. It is at this later period that we find the tragedian's correspondence recalling, again and again, the memories of lost happiness. "Pauline, Pauline, my heart is riven!" he declaims; but adds, "Ah, tell me, do you remember those delirious moments of intoxication into which you plunged me before my last journey to Grenoble? Do you remember the caresses which you, you alone, inspired (which none but you have ever received from me); you called them forth, and I was lavish with them, moistening my face with your tears?" Similar ardent expressions of sensibility were still his wont subsequently to his return to Geneva, when he stopped before the Chevaley house. "Oh, my dear one, what a storm is this that has come over me; all the circumstances of our liaison have risen up in my memory as one thing, all

my limbs grew weak ; I spoke some words to you, called you by your name, as if you had been there ; and my tears gushed forth—oh, my dear one, to what pain have you condemned me ! " Pauline is still in the phase of her passion in which such means can call forth some evanescent sentiment. How blithe is Talma when he learns that she has wept to read one of these vehement, voluble, declamatory letters !

" My dear one," he cries in ectasy, " my Pauline, for I feel a need to call you by so sweet a name, I prostrate myself at your feet, I embrace them in my transports of gratitude ; your soul is ever revealing itself as kinder to me than I had believed, and your good deeds are always surpassing my hopes."[1] On this kindness he was always making demands, month by month, throughout the liaison. He deals gently with her, prudently, avoiding the shocks of sudden demands. At first his requests are for little souvenirs, of small value. From Geneva, during his stay there in September, he asks : " Be so kind to me, my dear one, as to

[1] This last phrase is reminiscent of the part of Orestes, in *Andromaque*, one of Talma's best parts :—

" Grâce aux dieux, mon malheur passe mon espérance."—Act V, scene 5.

PAULINE BONAPARTE
From a lithograph of about 1840

send me some Madras, but only such as you have often worn. I want to wear it round my head, and, in the morning, round my neck."[1] How could Pauline refuse to grant this prayer for a little sentimental present? Probably she sent the Madras as requested, through her major-domo, for we do not find it cropping up again in the tragedian's letters. But this is not the case with regard to a certain bust she has promised him. Oh! this bust! It becomes a nightmare! Talma presses for it unceasingly, unremittingly, untiringly.

"And that bust? And your bust? And my bust?" He wants it. Is he going to have it? As early as September 21, 1812, he is reminding Pauline of her promise. "And your bust, my dear one, do not forget to give orders for it to be sent me. Make arrangements with Ferrand to that effect. Above all other things do I want that bust, I long for it infinitely! I shall leave you no peace till it is sent me. Realize that you have promised it to me." A month passes, and he returns to the attack; he has not received his bust yet. Pauline once more

[1] See in the *Mémoires de Madame la duchesse d'Abrantès*, IV. 192, a curious anecdote about Pauline and her Madras.

puts off sending it. "You say you will not be able to give me the bust on which I was counting until one of your people comes to Paris. There I am all at once deprived of it altogether; but it is your will, I make no protest at all." He resigns himself, therefore, and his resignation lasts five months. Not one of Pauline's attendants has come to Paris as yet. Tired of the struggle, and in despair at remaining without news, Talma writes direct to Ferrand, charging him to go on his knees to Pauline. The major-domo on his knees before the Princess! That is all very well on the stage, but at a Napoleonic court? "Impress upon her," runs the lover's instructions, "all my grieving over her absence and her sufferings!" A journey spares the willing Ferrand the execution of this delicate commission. On March 19, 1813, he suddenly makes his appearance before Talma. Ah, with what anxiety is he cross-examined! How detail after detail is wrested from him! How minute is the tragedian's amorous curiosity! And what ecstasy is his after listening to the story! "And my ring—what, my dear one, you are wearing it, wearing it as a memento of me! And that sign that you made to Ferrand at the

moment of his departure, when so many were standing round, pointing to the ring to remind him of the orders you had given him ! My dear one, so many touching marks of your perfect sweetness make me lose my reason."

But the bust ? His bust ! Talma did not lose his reason so far as to forget to think about that. Ferrand has no orders to deliver it, but the Princess will have it sent later. " And your bust, my dear one, which I am so troubled to be without, which I have seen at Cor[visart]'s house,[1] and which I thought so much like you ! which occasioned such violent emotion in me when I looked at it ! Ferrand assures me that you will give me one when you return." Return ! Pauline was hardly thinking of that ! It was at Nice she was living now, ever since February 8,[2] the second day after she received permission from her brother :—

" The Emperor to Princess Pauline Borghèse.

" FONTAINEBLEAU, *January 27*, 1813.

" I have your letter of January 20. I note

[1] Corvisart, the Emperor's doctor. In August he had been summoned from Paris to Aix to attend Pauline. Cf. Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon et sa famille*, VII. 375.

[2] *Ibid.*, VIII. 334.

with regret the bad state of your health. You would have done better to have come to Paris than to have let yourself be transported to one place after another through the hopefulness of doctors. You would have done better to go to Nice rather than to Hyères ; I do not see what there is to prevent you going to that town."[1]

That is what Talma has already written to Pauline, word for word ; and afterwards to Ferrand. But now arrangements are made. The Princess is condemned, for long weeks to come, to a depressing sojourn at Hyères, where mournful surroundings and solitude come near to killing her.[2] During this time, at Paris, Talma goes on begging for little presents, trifling souvenirs. While waiting for the bust which is so long in coming, he will remain contented with a little boat, one of those charming light skiffs which, tied to white posts, are swaying at the will of the wave on the pools of Pauline's country estate, the Château de Neuilly. We

[1] *Archives nationales, série AF* IV., *carton* 897. Léon Lecestre, *Lettres inédites de Napoléon Ier*, II. 211, No. 952.

[2] Cf. *Catalogue de la précieuse collection de lettres autographes ayant appartenu à M. Victorien Sardou, membre de l'Académie Française ;* Paris, May, 1909, No. 15.

should not have expected to find the tragedian on the water. "You will authorize me," he says to the Princess, "to take one of your boats. As I am going to shut myself up in my country house,[1] it would give me a great deal of pleasure to have this boat, which will be a present from you." The unfortunate part for Pauline was that he did not rest content with means of conveyance on the water, but aimed at more important presents. On December 23, 1812, the lover ventures to make a handsome request. He leads up to it with great skill, making a pretext of his quarrel with Geoffroy, the *Journal de l'Empire's* dramatic critic, whom he had recently struck in his box at the Comédie-Française.[2] He is thinking of retiring from the stage, and it is here that Pauline's protection can avail him. He writes to her about it with a weariness and a humility very creditable to a man of his ability :—

[1] As to Talma's country holidays at his house at Drunoy, see Lorédan Larchey's *Documents pour servir à l'histoire de nos mœurs, mémoires de Pierre Louette, jardinier de Talma ;* Paris [1869].

[2] The documents bearing on this quarrel between Geoffroy and Talma have been collected by M. Charles Marc des Granges in his *Geoffroy et la critique dramatique sous le Consulat et l'Empire*, pp. 480 *et seq.*

" . . . I cannot and will not remain for long in a profession in which the respect and favour of the public cannot protect a man from such insults, from diatribes hawked about all over Europe by the newspapers. People who live far away from Paris cannot be enlightened respecting all these shameful intrigues. You are my only haven, my dear one. I rely on your tender friendship for my escape from an intolerable situation. As things stand it would be assuming too much to believe that my annual salary will be secured to me. If it was cancelled, I should find myself in considerable difficulties by reason of the contracts I have undertaken for the ensuing year. One of my friends affords me, at this juncture, an opportunity of not merely making his loss good, if the worst comes to the worst, but also of making a start to assure my independence. He offers me a considerable share in one of those licences which the Government grants for the exportation of goods to England. He has just lodged an application for one of them (they are continually being granted) with M. le comte Sussy, Minister of Commerce and Manufactures ; but it is needful that his application, which is already

well backed, should be still more so, if possible, in order to render success certain. It has occurred to me that you would not refuse to assist me in an important matter like this. The thing to do, then, is for you to be so extremely kind as to write to M. le comte de Sussy, Minister of Commerce, strongly recommending to his notice M. Marguerie, jr., merchant, of Havre, saying that you take a special interest in the success of his application. You will send the letter to me for me to forward it to the departmental office through M. Mazurié, or you will address it direct to the Minister, just as you think fit. That would decide the Minister in his favour immediately. But, my dear one, there is no time to be lost, for the affair is in hand, and the time for presentation for signature is very near. Perhaps it is decidedly indiscreet, my dear one, to ask this assistance of you at a moment when you are not equal to taking thought for others' troubles, but, dear and loving friend, to whom shall I turn if not to her who has shown herself so kind to me, to whom it will be so sweet to owe all ? "

And, delicately, on the last page of the letter, Talma slips a " little ring " over Pauline's

finger, bearing a discreet inscription. On second thoughts, he decides against leaving the Comédie-Française, and thenceforth this business of the licence does not come up again in the correspondence.

On the other hand, he does not cease to offer his services to Pauline, just as he had done, some months earlier, at Geneva. He discovers that she is thinking of purchasing the château de Petit-Bourg, and straightway makes a proposal. "I have obtained information, and think that it will suit you to perfection. Would you like me to go and see it and report on it?" It was at the moment when Pauline was realizing 750,000 francs on certain estates of hers in Westphalia, that she thought of acquiring this estate near Paris, which had the advantage of Neuilly in several respects. The idea caught her fancy sufficiently for her to set the business part of her household to work and to send her confidential business-man, Decazes,[1] thither. But Talma was there too, and he addresses a detailed report to Pauline, full of all he saw when

[1] "Decazes, Louis XVIII's future minister, was entrusted with Pauline's most important business." (Prévost-Paradol, *Le Duc Decazes;* Paris, 1860, p. 6.)

visiting his mistress's future residence. Between two passionate outbursts he abruptly interposes a eulogy of the château as follows :—

" If you buy it you will have to repair it. I think it will suit you perfectly ; its situation is, as you know, very beautiful, very dry, very healthy. The principal suite on the ground floor, which is well raised and suitable in every way, consists of a hall, an antechamber, a very large dining-room, a very fine drawing-room, and a large bedroom, with the requisite smaller apartments. The first floor is divided by a very long, very broad corridor, and the rooms are well arranged on either side. Twenty-two visitors could be accommodated there. The style of architecture of the château would not, I fear, allow of wings being added, or other buildings, but they could be erected in the courtyards, where there is plenty of room. There would be repairs to be done and I certainly think that to do it up and to furnish it according to modern ideas of luxury, the outlay would have to mount up to two or three hundred thousand francs ; as for the farms that go with the estate, they are in the best condition pos-

sible and have just been overhauled anew. The income is nearly 25,000 livres. The park is very beautiful, and will lend itself to further improvements. That, dear friend, is all I can tell you, and all that I think needful, to allow you to form an opinion as to whether it will suit you."

And then the undercurrent of enthusiasm on his own account comes to the surface :—

" For myself, I desire it from the bottom of my heart, inasmuch as I might hope to pass a good part of my life not far from you."

But the day of hope is nearly over ! To-morrow (1814) will come the Eagles' first fall ; then 1815 and their overthrow. Besides, what could Talma hope for ? Could he think of being able to renew a liaison which had certainly run its course and on which judgment had been passed early in 1813 ? In fact, on March 25, we find him writing to Pauline : " I was ardently awaiting the arrival of the moment when I should see you once again as a dear friend, seeing that other sweeter ties must be renounced." This beautiful affection, then, outlasted the amours of Forbin, of Montrond, of ten others. Death alone touched it with irony—it was Lafon

who uttered the farewell in the name of the Comédie-Française on the brink of Talma's grave.[1] The lover of 1802 eulogizing the lover of 1812 ! But then is it not Love who is Death's playfellow ?

[1] Cf. *Discours prononcé sur la tombe de Talma, le 21 Octobre, 1826, par M. Lafon, sociétaire du Théâtre Français, et dont l'impression a été votée en assemblée générale ;* Paris, 1826, pp. 16. Talma died a year after Pauline (Oct. 19, 1826) in his house in the rue de la Tour-des-Dames and was interred at the Père-Lachaise cemetery. As to the scandal which was caused by his purely civil funeral rites, see the pamphlet by L. F. Estrade, *De la liberté religieuse en France à l'occasion des funérailles de Talma et sous le rapport des conséquences politiques de cet événement ;* Paris, 1826.

CHAPTER V

A BEAUTY TO THE LAST

IT was a mournful year, this year 1813, for Pauline. Far from everybody, she was pining away, sinking under the burden of her disillusions. The four months, February to May, that she passed at Nice, passed to the mournful accompaniment of boredom, boredom, boredom. Talma was back at Paris and nothing more was heard of him, apart from the echoes of his quarrels and striking successes, but letters which she got tired of receiving and to which she did not reply. Lieutenant de Brack was quite forgotten. Among the caprices of this queen of caprices he had been the most evanescent. As for Commander Duchand who, at Aix, had escorted her during her promenades, cased in his uniform and raising on high the plume of his monumental busby—Duchand had, in January, 1813, received orders to rejoin the *Grande Armée*. Blangini was creating melodies

PAULINE BONAPARTE
After a lithograph by Prunier

in Westphalia; Forbin was out of favour; Montrond in England. In her exile there only remained to her fading spectres of faded lovers, "ships that had passed in the night"—and the nights had passed, too; here to-day and gone to-morrow. Weariness born of so many sentimental erotic experiences weighed on her, beyond doubt; even on her by this time. The last resources of a vitality sapped and ruined to its core had been drawn upon, and now it began to drag along, irremediably over-tired by reason of the amours that were no more. At this period we no longer find her occupied with her favourite distractions. Around her is nothing but her household, quite a modest household, now that all the brilliant followers have set out for the armies which, far away in Germany, are winning the Eagles' last victories. Peyre, the pharmaceutical *maître Jacques*, has likewise taken his leave, on the second day after a dispute with Pauline. No one waits on her now but her ladies- and women-in-waiting, complaisant assistants in her amorous intrigues. Long, monotonous, empty evenings, whose end is so long in coming; which they try to foreshorten with childish games, and which leave

the drawing-room deserted by 10 o'clock. And the nights! the dreary nights, lonely ones too; when the hand of insomnia lies heavy on the heart, when wide-open eyes see phantoms galore in darkness which gapes and terrifies. What dreams then for the radiant Paulette of the year IV? What dead lovers does she wrap in memory's shrouds? What slow and silent tears fall from her eyes as their disconsolate shades pass stealthily by? What tenderly-loved corpses are there in the cemetery of her withered amours! Fréron, for one, lying over there, on the shore of the tropical sea, amid the gigantic vegetation of the charnel-house of the Cape; Fréron, handsome Fréron when the *Muscadins* flourished, and when the Terror was in full swing! Then, too, Leclerc; the husband brought back with honour from the hellish colony, his coffin shielded by the tricolour flag; Leclerc, who sleeps in the marble mausoleum at Montgobert, shadowed by century-old cedars and tall, slender poplars. And Canouville, too, cut down by the Moskowa, beheaded amid the whistle of the bullets and hurled into empurpled snow with his mistress's portrait over his heart; Canouville, who, like Fréron, lies in foreign soil,

at peace amidst the enemy. And not so long is it since Septeuil fell from his horse in the Peninsula, and was brought back to Paris on the straw of a baggage-waggon, a living man, thanks to a miraculous chance alone. To-morrow it may be Duchand's turn, of whom no news comes as yet, save that he is in the thick of the hurly-burly, where the Imperial Eagles are fighting for life.

Altogether this light-o'-love's memory can be serving but to summon up a mournful procession of silhouetted funerals, of tragedy statues draped in shrouds. To that has it come, to memories that people a cemetery, to lovers' stories of a dead, dead past—this seventeen-year long erotic career of Princess Pauline Borghèse.

. . . . . .

After the finer months of 1813 she nevertheless regained something of the astonishing vigour that characterizes sufferers from nerves. After a stay at the waters of Gréoulx she returned to Aix, July 12 to August 19.[1] Then, as autumn drew near, she went back to Hyères for some months. Early in 1814 she went to Luc, in the

[1] Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon et sa famille*, VIII. 346.

Var, taking up her residence at the Villa Charles. "Mme. Borghèse's stay in the Var Department has not influenced ideas at all; she has scarcely been noticed," observes a report dated June 7, 1814,[1] and dating, also, thus early, the waning of her life. Her loyalty to Napoleon, her devotion to her brother, were about to take her out of herself for a while, during the ephemeral reign at Elba. It was on April 26 that the news of the Emperor's overthrow reached Pauline, simultaneously with the announcement that Napoleon was at her door. He soon appeared, attended by the Allies' representatives, on the way to his first exile. "From that moment," says a contemporary account (one, however, not above suspicion, it is true), "she determined to accompany him to Elba and to remain by his side in future."[2]

Was not now the time for Pauline to show

[1] Georges Firmin-Didot, ambassador's secretary, *Royauté ou Empire, la France en* 1814, *d'après les rapports inédits du Comte Anglès;* Paris, n.d., p. 31.

[2] Count von Waldburg-Truchsess, commissary nominated by H.M. the King of Prussia to accompany Napoleon, *Nouvelle relation de l'itinéraire de Napoléon de Fontainebleau à l'île d'Elbe,* translated from the German and revised by the author, with several facts added not contained in the original; Paris, 1815, p. 39.

ELISA BONAPARTE, SISTER OF PAULINE BONAPARTE

herself as she had ever been ? to give full play to that innate kindness, to resume by means of the charm of single-minded affectionateness, what Caroline and Elisa had wrested from her—hard, egotistical, cankered with the disease of politics as they were, during the halcyon days of Imperial splendour—thanks to their acuteness, trickery, and dour scheming. This time 'twas Pauline's turn to reign ; a sovereignty of charm, of gossamer grace, of smiles and mirages. Was it not her task at Elba to make the great loser forget the absence of his faithless wife and his ungrateful sisters ? To the Emperor's veterans, too, was it not likewise her rôle to personify, in daily contrast with the rough ways of the professed soldier, the essential being of that precious refining recollection of Parisian femininity ? Some days subsequently to Napoleon's passage through Luc, she, in her turn, reached the coast. "On May 19," says Anglès' report, dated June 7, "she put in at Saint-Raphaël with a Neapolitan frigate, on the way to take the waters at Ischia ; she has been speaking of landing in Elba. To accommodate her an English frigate hove to at Villefranche to take her across ; the captain seemed very much

annoyed at not doing so."[1] She went on to Naples, received a missive from Murat for the Emperor, and reached the island on June 1. She only stayed there one night, and then departed. "This interview and the separation seem to have touched Bonaparte deeply," declares the report of June 18, 1814. On September 12 following it explains Pauline's sudden departure as consequent on "her belief that the air would occasion her too much suffering."[2] We are ignorant, then, of the secret reason for the journey. Pauline made a second one in the following October. In spite of the bad state of her health, she decided to embark on the 27th.[3] Taillade, who was in command of the Elba flotilla, landed her at Porto-Ferrajo on October 31.

Her reign there lasted four months. The record of her stay there is throughout one of gaiety and fascination. With her a vivid ray of

[1] Georges Firmin-Didot, *Royauté ou Empire*, p. 31.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 46, 124.

[3] Autograph signed letter from Pauline to Elisa. La Favorite, Oct. 27, 1814, ½ p. 8vo. *Catalogue d'une précieuse collection de lettres autographes concernant Napoléon Ier, sa famille, ses maréchaux, ses généraux, et ses ministres;* Paris, May, 1894, No. 58.

hope entered Napoleon's poverty-stricken palace. He received her blithely, and all the islanders rose and cheered at the coming of this radiant guest. " Hearts do not pulsate to order ; Porto-Ferrajo was ablaze," says Pons.[1] It was a period, too, of balls and of fêtes, of a renascence of youth and cheerfulness, of something of France's charm taking root in rugged Elba. Feminine refinement mitigated the roughness and brutality incidental to a gathering of soldiers. It was no longer a mere military colony, but a soil ready prepared for the planting of concord and urbanity. It came natural to Pauline to attempt the task, with the help of her seductive powers. She was seen " on very familiar terms with the officers of the guard." [2] Thanks to the Emperor she found there an adept dancer for balls, Captain Jules Loubert, who " was considered the Vestris of the guard."[3]

Strange to say, he has never been reckoned among Pauline's lovers. The pamphleteers have

[1] Pons (de l'Hérault), *Souvenirs et anecdotes de l'île d'Elbe*, p. 139.

[2] Georges Firmin-Didot, *Royauté ou Empire*, p. 197 ; Report of Jan. 10, 1815.

[3] Pons (de l'Hérault), *Souvenirs et anecdotes de l'île d'Elbe*, p. 330.

not invented any anecdotes of the kind in connexion with her stay at Elba, for that which represents the Princess as coquetting with General Drouot is only tittle-tattle. By this period good old Drouot had turned pious, and never dreamt of alternating his hobby of Bible-reading with the practice of earthly and ephemeral pleasures. Nevertheless the police reports notify us that Pauline had not wholly abandoned her tender ways of bygone days. The "Black Cabinet," it would seem, intercepted letters from her to Duchand, by this time artillery colonel and a baron by virtue of letters patent from Louis XVIII, registered November 25, 1814.[1] Antoine Jean Baptiste Duchand, born at Grénoble, May 11, 1780, seems to have been taken back into favour for the time being. He certainly resumed his correspondence with Pauline after the Hundred Days, inasmuch as she writes to him from Lucca, August 2, 1815, that "his affection has withstood the test of calamity."[2] Duchand was

[1] Louis Paris, *Dictionnaire des anoblissements, contenant l'indication des anoblissements, concessions, collations de titres, etc., accordés par décrets ou ordonnances des souverains de France*, 1804–1868; Paris, 1869, I. 183.

[2] Charles Nauroy, *Les secrets de Bonaparte;* Paris, 1889,

then a pensioner ; at Waterloo he was one of the heroes of the *Immortelle*. Brave as Cambronne, he came to the same end, marrying an English wife, " decidedly pretty and very rich."[1] He waited for the July monarchy to enter active service again. September 4, 1830, he was nominated major-general of artillery and subsequently became the head of the school at Metz, then of the school at Fontainebleau, lieutenant-general, and, finally, inspector-general of artillery. In February, 1848, he was free again, and died at Paris, January 3, 1849. With him must have disappeared one of the last of Pauline's lovers.

As for her, she quitted Porto-Ferrajo March 2, 1815, just when the Emperor was beginning the Hundred Days' epic, and landed (April 3) at Viareggio, where, for some reason or other, Borghèse was awaiting her. Sick and bedridden,

pp. 289, 290. M. Charles Nauroy states that this information is drawn from the *Archives nationales, series* F⁷, *cartons* 3775 *and* 3776 ; but there is certainly an error of transcription here, for *cartons* F⁷ 3775, 3776 only contain, to the best of our knowledge, the daily reports of the ordinary police from April to Sept., 1812.

[1] Georgette Ducrest, *Mémoires sur l'impératrice Joséphine*, p. 107.

from that time onwards her decline began.[1] She does not figure at all in the dying agonies of the Empire. Far from the catastrophe, under the surveillance of informers and spies, she resembles a rose in a vase which, slowly, petal by petal, acquiesces in the evanescence of ephemeral queenship. Why should she outlast the splendour of which she was but a ray? The Empire is dead; her day is gone; her death seems near.

And yet it is ten years before it actually comes, and meanwhile she drags out her life in an agony of melancholia. Ah! she is no longer the lively, bright Paulette of the days of old, the "chicken," envied and chaffed by the babblers of the Consulate period,[2] but a poor broken-winged creature, depressed, exhausted, more or less given up by the doctors, an invalid beyond doubt, fluctuating between despondencies and whims,[3] and, at this period of collapse, super-

[1] As to Pauline during the events of 1815, see the curious documents published by G. Sforza, *Paolina Bonaparte a Campignano e ai Bagni di Lucca nel* 1815, in the *Revue Napoléonienne*, June–Sept., 1902, pp. 144 *et seq.*

[2] Gilbert Augustin Thierry, *Conspirateurs et gens de police; la mystérieuse affaire Donnadieu;* Paris, 1909, p. 18.

[3] "While really and seriously ill, she, like many neurotic women, indulges in the pre-occupations and the exactions of a sham invalid." L. de Lanzac de Laborie, *La famille impériale du sacre au divorce*, 1805–1809, *d'après d'une récente*

vised by Borghèse, who at last begins to have a grievance.

From the year XI to 1814, what has he said, what has he done, in the way of blaming his wife for her carryings-on? What, mocked and deceived, almost held up to ridicule, and aware of everything, has he stood on his wounded and outraged dignity? No; he has done nothing, said nothing, manifested nothing. In a good-tempered way, he has run after unimportant womenfolk, has accepted everything, admitted everything, with eyes shut, conscience easy, and dignity elastic. But now, that is all finished with. As the evening of life draws on, Borghèse finds that he is a gentleman, and has honour and reputation to take thought for; it must be owned that he has plenty of excuse for playing the indignant husband and the frowning tyrant —on a small scale. The Emperor once fallen, he regains an exact sense of duty. Had adultery ever been condoned in his family, a family in which popes, cardinals, and cuckolds may be collected by the bushel? Furthermore, he now

publication; Le Correspondant, April 10, 1900, p. 176. The "recent publication" is Vol. III. of M. Frédéric Masson's *Napoléon et sa famille*.

discovers that he has nothing in common with the Bonapartes—these Bonapartes, indeed ! low-class people, smuggler-princes, little Corsican upstarts. " My brother-in-law," writes Princess Aldobrandini-Borghèse to the Chevalier de Fontenay, " my brother-in-law belongs to the Bonaparte family, and, as such, is included in the law which deals with that family ; the King is well aware how correct has been his behaviour during the Hundred Days ; he is grateful to him for it ; he knows that his connexion with the family is a merely nominal one, and he fully realizes how wise and prudent his conduct has been."[1] Even this nominal connexion Borghèse is about to renounce, and from 1815 makes efforts in that direction. Thenceforward it has been his plan to avoid all life in common with the Princess, and, to remove temptation to inclination for a better understanding, has had the doors walled up, at the palace at Rome, which communicate with the Princess's apartments.[2] This detail has been questioned and

[1] *Revue des autographes, des curiosités, de l'histoire et de la biographie*, No. 220, March, 1899, No. 320, fifteen letters from the Princess Aldobrandini-Borghèse to the Chevalier de Fontenay, offered for 45 francs.

[2] *Biographie des hommes vivants ;* Paris, Sept., 1816, I. 415.

CAROLINE MURAT, SISTER OF PAULINE BONAPARTE

formally denied.[1] It must, however, be conceded, seeing that in a letter of November, 1815, from Louis to Cardinal Cunéo, we read: "After the serious insult to which she (Pauline) has been subjected, after her husband's clear manifestation of his intention not only never to come to an understanding with her, but even never to receive her at his house, there remains no other course for her to adopt than that of any woman who retains any feeling for a wife's dignity."[2] We can guess what this course is: separation, divorce, which will have to be pleaded before the "Rota," the only court whose jurisdiction is admissible. Pauline likewise, on her side, has complaints to make against her husband. "That beast Borghèse," she writes to her brother Lucien, "refuses to pay the expenses incurred here on his account. What a frightful thing it is to be perpetually being deluded by men!"[3] Deluded by men!

[1] Rabbe, Vieilh de Boisjolin et Sainte-Preuve, *Biographie universelle et portative des contemporains*, I. 522.

[2] *Catalogue de la belle et importante collection de lettres autographes de feu M. le Lajarriette, ancien receveur des finances à Nantes, dont la vente aura lieu le jeudi, Novembre* 15, 1860, *et les* 19 *jours suivants ;* Paris, 1860, No. 398.

[3] *Catalogue d'une précieuse collection de lettres autographes concernant Napoléon Ier, sa famille, ses maréchaux, ses généraux, et ses ministres, vendue Mai* 24, 1894 ; Paris, 1894, No. 59.

Was she thinking of Forbin? In the end she summarized her grievances, and appealed to her brothers to endorse them. From Albano, June 8, 1816, Louis writes stating that he is willing to sign Pauline's statement.[1] Such was the prelude to the avalanche of memorials and summaries which were going to be issued at Rome by the two parties in order to parade before the eyes of the ecclesiastical tribunal the fragmentary evidence, the naked remnants, of their pitiable love-story.[2]

From 1816 to 1824 occurred a respite in this voluble warfare and the crisis between this married couple seemed to be passing off. The question of the divorce is relegated to the background, and the separation, though a fact in practice, is not so legally. Had Pauline been appeased? It is said that about 1818, during this period, she became the mistress of a Neapolitan, one Signor Palomba, who, according

[1] *Catalogue d'une précieuse réunion de lettres autographes comprenant une nombreuse série de lettres et de pièces signées par Napoléon I^er^, et les membres de sa famille, vendue Juin* 15, 1910; Paris, 1910, No. 24.

[2] Baron Albert Lumbroso has given a bibliography of these affidavits in his *Miscellanea Napoleonica*, V. pp. lxxiv–lxxvi.

to his own account, was a marquis, della Cesa.[1] It may be so, but seems unlikely ; we know she was ill at the time, and far from fit for frivolities and gallantry. And, besides, what proof of it have we ? Not a letter, not a note, nothing. Some gossip, an anonymous rumour ; that is a poor warrant for introducing Palomba and his borrowed title into the paradise of the imperial Venus.

Subsequently we find her once again busy with the separation question. Here is the evidence of a crisis drawing near again :—

" To Monsignor Cunéo, Grand Inquisitor of the Holy Office, Rome.

" Porto, *May* 24, 1824.

" My dear Monsignor Cunéo—I have received the letter which you wrote to me through Mme. d'Hautmesnil and I am fully persuaded of all the diligence which you are to-day bringing to bear to recover all the documents which have been submitted *alla rota* on my behalf. I am in hopes, therefore, that you will have sent some to Cavaliere Gozzani, for I am trusting to his being able to forward them to the prince

[1] Joseph Turquan, *Souveraines et grandes dames ; les sœurs de Napoléon*, pp. 317, 318.

by to-morrow's courier, who will take my letters to him. I know that my affairs are in good hands ; my confidence in yourself is likewise a source of rest and tranquillity to me. I beg you, my dear Mgr. Cunéo, to be so kind as to accept a little souvenir which I send you, and each day, at breakfast, you will think of her who begs you to accept it.

" Farewell, my dear Mgr. Cunéo, be assured of my friendly feelings and genuine attachment to you.

" Princess Pauline Borghèse.

" P.S.—My compliments to the Cavaliere. I beg of him to wear this pin in remembrance of me."[1]

Here is no sign of ill-feeling against Borghèse. We may assume that the case was pleaded mildly by Pauline. But what happened then, in the space of the ensuing fortnight ? What kind of gratitude has Borghèse shown for her languid, inert forbearance ? For we find the Napoleonic characteristics suddenly reawakening in the Cleopatra's heart and a furious note to Mgr. Cunéo giving vent to her wrath. This

[1] *Intermédiaire des chercheurs et curieux*, Nov. 10, 1876, col. 671.

time she has finished with Borghèse! "Seeing that he is not sensible to the loyalty and submission of my feelings towards himself, and that, on the contrary, he has trifled with me and deluded me horribly, I have resolved to place my case before the Rota."[1] Once more it is nothing but an idle oath, a fruitless promise, as usual. The Rota will never have to decide on this case. If the documents are submitted to it, it will not have time to examine them; twelve months later, almost to the day, the Princess is dead.

For almost two years she scarcely leaves her sick-bed. Always reclining, she is experiencing the final hours of her silent rest. "I suffer a great deal," she writes to Lucien, December 17, 1823; "the cold is very bad for me, and the doctors forbid me to go out in the evening, and even in day-time, unless it is very fine.[2] Four

[1] Signed letter from Pauline to Mgr. Cunéo; Villa Paolina, Monte S. Quilice, June 8, 1824, pp. 3½ 8vo, No. 225 in the *Catalogue Laverdet*, 1858, sold for 10 francs. *Manuel de l'amateur d'autographes*, Letter B. *L'Amateur d'autographes*, March 16, 1863, p. 95.

[2] *Mélanges curieux et anecdotiques tirés d'une collection de lettres autographes et de documents historiques ayant appartenu à M. Fossé-Darcosse, conseiller-référendaire à la Cour des Comptes, publiés avec les notes du collecteur, et précédés d'une notice par M. Charles Asselineau;* Paris, 1861, p. 66, No. 151.

months earlier she had been transferred to the Villa Paolina, near the Porta Pia, and was now one of those invalids who, guessing that their end is near, lose all faith, all confidence, all hope. In revolt against the remonstrances of "*Madame Mère,*" indifferent to what the doctors prescribed,[1] she gives herself up to uninterrupted enjoyment of the heat of the last suns she is to see. At this time, perhaps, during these lonely hours of despondency, re-echo in her memory the echoes of St. Helena. Across the hostile seas, far away, beyond the equatorial ocean, the imposing, though pitiable, drama is nearing its end. Can she forget that it was to her that the Emperor uttered one of his latest cries of distress, one of his final appeals amidst his sufferings. "The Emperor counts on Your Highness to bring to the notice of influential people in England the true state of his disease," is what Montholon wrote to her on March 17, 1821, from Longwood. "He is helpless and is dying on this terrible rock. His agony is fearful."[2] Ill and exhausted as she was, she made a

[1] Baron Larrey, *Madame Mère* (*Napoleonis Mater*), II. 297.

[2] *Accusation contre les meurtriers de Napoléon ;* Paris, August, 1821, pp. 13, 14.

brave response to this cry of anguish and dismay which came from the consecrated island, and, gaining strength from the strength of her loyalty, it is from her hand that issued the last protest of the Napoleonidae against Britain's deicide. For a moment we may digress from the recital of her sentimental-erotic life, the *procès-verbal* of her slow, long-drawn agony, to quote this double appeal to Lord Liverpool in the beautiful letter, written at Rome, July 11, 1821 :—

" My Lord,

" Monsieur l'abbé Bonavito [i.e. Bonavita] who left St. Helena March 17 last, and who has just reached Rome, has brought us the most alarming news of the state of the Emperor's health. Enclosed I send you copies of letters which will give you full details concerning his physical sufferings. The disease to which he is a victim is fatal at St. Helena, and it is in the name of all the members of the Emperor's family that I demand of the English Government a change of climate for him. If so reasonable a request is met with a refusal it will be equivalent to passing a death sentence, and in this case I ask leave to set out for St. Helena, to go and

rejoin the Emperor, in order to minister to him in his last moments.

"I beg of you, my lord, that you will be so kind as to apply without delay for this permission from your Government, so that I may be free to set out as soon as possible. Since my health will not allow me to travel by land, it is my intention to embark at Cività Vecchia for England, and thence to take the first ship that sails for St. Helena; but I should prefer to be given leave to go to London, to obtain all that is needful for so long a voyage.

"If your Government insists on leaving the Emperor to perish on this rock of St. Helena, I appeal to you, my lord, to overcome the obstacles that may be put in the way of my departure, even so far as to ensure that the Government at Rome shall not interfere. I know that the Emperor's moments are numbered, and I shall never forgive myself if I have not done all that is in me to soothe his last moments and to give proof of my whole-hearted devotion to his august person. Should there be some ships at the port of Leghorn at the date of my departure, I should request a further

favour—that one of them should call for me at Cività Vecchia to convey me to England.

"I implore you, my lord, to acquaint Lady Holland, who has always shown such very great interest in the Emperor, with my letter and the copies sent herewith, assuring her of my friendly feelings towards her. Please be assured, yourself, of my deepest respect.

"PRINCESS PAULINE BORGHÈSE."[1]

Thus ready was she to go and share in the anguish of the St. Helena agony. But fruitless was the request! vain the prayer!

When she was signing this letter the Emperor's corpse had been in its lonely, nameless grave for more than two months. Far away over the water Death had put an end to the epic. The last word had been spoken, and Pauline herself had nothing to do but to wend her way, like a fading rose, along the road of her own agony. Between the Emperor's death and her own, four years intervened. "To know how to grow old," said Prévost-Paradol, "is not so easy as people would have us believe, and it is a kind act on Nature's part to many an

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 15–17.

individual when she spares him that final test." Such was Pauline's lot ; Death came to claim her in the flower of her age, while still young and beautiful. She acquiesces and abdicates. And what, indeed, of the splendours of the past, has she to regret ? Emptiness, loneliness, silence, have slowly, insistently woven their web round about her. The beautiful palace of her early married life in the year XI has now been handed over to Charles IV of Spain, and she has left it for the Palazzo Sciarra, a pile of glorious stones, a ruin gilded by the wonderful Roman suns. There she can taste the exquisite bitterness of renunciation of the vanities of grace and charm. "I remain alone and lonely ; but nothing matters to me now," she writes, April 29, 1825, to her friend, Mme. d'Hautmesnil.[1] She has dismissed her musician Pacini, has sold her horses, has made her peace with Borghèse. Now that he feels she is at the gates of the last farewell, he consents to forgive, to forget. To-morrow she will be no more. He does not think his honour compromised if he concedes that illusory consolation. And besides, the end is

[1] *Catalogue d'autographes Etienne Charavay ;* Paris, 1888, No. 14.

really at hand. White, pallid, thin, almost transparent, reminding those around her of the fairy-like, fascinating slimness of her girlhood days, Pauline has taken to her bed for the last time. The Imperial family are warned, but Jérôme is the only one to arrive in time.[1] It is June 7, 1825. All day she has been feeling Death close behind her, and, overcome by the thought of what may happen to her charms and her beauty, she implores them with tears to leave her body untouched. They promise ; the post-mortem scalpel shall not cut into that rose-tinted whiteness that the lace on her bed is covering. A coquette to death's door ! She will disappear arrayed and adorned, with the last recollection of her to be "how pretty she is"; all the more so, if anything, for the marks left by suffering. She will leave them, so to speak, in a halo. But meanwhile, Death comes ever nearer and nearer. All the signs of the final agony make their appearance in turn, and the pallor of Death spreads over that face which once was so charming and so tender. At one moment they thought she had really passed

[1] Baron Larrey, *Madame Mère* (*Napoleonis Mater*), II. 309.

away, but she rallies to utter a final message, a last request,—that when she is dead they will cover her face. They promise her that, amid their sobs. She smiles once more, and resists Death no longer.

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